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LAYLANDER

THE CHRONICLES OF A CONTENTED MAN

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THE CHRONICLES OF A CONTENTED MAN

C. J. Laylander

THE CHRONICLES OF A CONTENTED MAN

BY O. J. LAYLANDER

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THE CHRONICLES OF A CONTENTED MAN

THE APOLOGY

I AM not a distinguished man. I have made no notable achievement in science, art, or letters. I am not the proud possessor of a rosary of titles and degrees. I have not served on the crew of the ship of state. I am not a great preacher or reformer. I have not accumulated great wealth. Nevertheless I am an unusual man, for I am a contented one.

What follows may not be dignified therefore by the term "an autobiography"; it is the simply-told story of one who has found life very interesting; whose work has been a constant joy; whose efforts have been fully rewarded. I have had no slight portions of grief and of disappointment, but they have been charged off as bad accounts in the business of living. As a result I find myself at sixty-eight a rich man.

Ripening years have their compensations. One is the ability to evaluate life experiences. It has been observed that if one wishes to die for a Cause he should do it before he reaches fifty. At a later date many things that seemed essential in early life sink into relative insignificance. One may come to appreciate those words in the Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh: "The poet has remarked that Heaven lies about us in our infancy, but I am not one of those who see in

that a reason why we should lie about Heaven in our old age."

Temperament, environment, formative influences in youth, reactions to the contacts of middle age, are all factors to be reckoned with in attempting an analysis of an acquired contentment. One thing is certain: contentment is not the product of material success. The immensely wealthy seldom reach the goal, and beyond a certain point the more wealth a man accumulates the rarer his chance to attain content. He whose chief aim is to amass a colossal fortune for his progeny paves the way for discontent. He who has a generous surplus and fails to employ it, preferably while he is alive, in enlarging the circles of enjoyment and usefulness to worthy people and causes, misses one of the supremest pleasures of living. Poverty in youth has great compensations. Many a man owes his success to having been born poor. Poverty is usually a better heritage than unearned wealth.

Neither is contentment the necessary corollary of achieved ideals. There is greater compensation in the partial achievement of a worthy ideal than the full attainment of an unworthy one. While there are numerous conditions favorable to the realization of the contented state, such as a strong body, inherited mentality, and similar blessings, yet these are not unqualified prerequisites. There are heroes and heroines among the physically defective. I doubt if Helen Keller is a discontented soul. The foundation of contentment rests in one's philosophy of life

It is the Burbank not the Bryan attitude towards life that chiefly counts. It is the sustaining philosophy that is expressed in the words of Whitman:

> "I exist as I am, that is enough,
> If no other in the world be aware
> I sit content,
> And if each and all be aware I sit content.
>
> One world is aware and by far the largest to me, and that is myself.
> And whether I come to my own today or in ten thousand or ten million years,
> I can cheerfully take it now or with equal cheerfulness I can wait."

Worry is the greatest foe of contentment; but given a workable philosophy, a man can grow into a state where he is the master. He must feel that the universal scheme is all right, and that he is not a good sport unless he can play unflinchingly whatever cards are dealt him. No one who is supremely selfish, who lacks human sympathy, who does not have an overwhelming desire to make people happy, can ever be contented.

People are a good deal like dogs in that they seem to know whether one's attitude is genuine or pretended. One must at heart be interested in and appreciative of fine qualities of character, wherever they appear. I never have been thrown into close contact with any class of people from whom I could not learn or who had to me no points of interest. An honest, wellmeaning, warmhearted, unselfish, though illiterate farmer appeals to me far more strongly than an

educated snob. In short, I am fond of people gener
ally. They have been almost uniformly kind to me.
can recall only three men who seemed studiously an
persistently to try to make me unhappy. One ap
proached mental irresponsibility; I forgave him. On
was a conceited, visionless small town boss. I forgo
him. One was the cold, cruel, unscrupulous head o
a powerful concern. I learned to laugh at him. I hav
been too much occupied with fine friendships to allo
any temporary disturbances to take root. I make i
a practice to keep away from people who migh
annoy me.

I have always been fond of the society of fin
women and much sunshine has come into my lif
through this window. Women have been my closes
friends, and to them I am chiefly indebted for what
ever of tenderness, of sympathy and of charity that
possess.

Although childless I have an irresistible love o
children. Among my choicest possessions are letter
of little children. For many years I have made it
practice to keep up a correspondence with groups o
preadolescents, substituting new ones as the old one
grew into their teens. There never has been any lac
of recruits. At present my list includes six darling
whose letters are an unfailing delight.

I am gifted with a strong sense of humor whic
has saved me from many a worry. Life is full o
comedy. I can not take seriously many situation
that seem quite disturbing to some of my friends
This applies especially in the fields of politic

and religion. Much that passes under these terms is interesting only because it is so amusing. What though it may be my personal belief that three-fourths of the voters are morons — in the sense that as adults they show the mentality of twelve year olds — and that many of the other fourth are on the borderland of fanaticism? What though I could justify my belief by pointing out the fact that mediocrity is voted into the highest offices in the land; that political accidents are proclaimed as second Lincolns? It is such a huge joke that it awakens in me no amazement, only keen amusement. Then I have a second laugh when I see these same morons suspicious and seeking new ways of being Barnumized.

I am not disturbed over anyone's religion. I have no desire to interfere in the slightest degree with the beliefs of my friends. There is always a bare possibility that they may be at least partly right. It follows that religious squabbles never disturb my equanimity. I refuse to get excited over things that in my philosophy are not only nonessential but which savor of the ridiculous. Most of the current theological wranglings are very, very old, and have been staged over and over again with better comedians and better tragedians than those on the religious stage today.

One's attitude towards life is the resultant of many forces. The wider the range of one's experiences the more likely that those forces will produce the contented state. Those that chiefly affected my own life may be recognized in the record that follows:

CHAPTER ONE

GENESIS

I AM told there was rejoicing in the little old Ohio farmhouse occupied by Andrew and Amanda Laylander and their three daughters when, on March 11th, 1858, the attendants announced that the new arrival was a boy. I hope it was not without debate that my mother consented to the name Orange. There were so many others in the Bible and out of it that might have been fitting and meaningful, but Orange Judd was the editor of the American Agriculturist — that pioneer — the daddy of all the farm papers that abound today, and my father was a "constant subscriber." Indeed the American Agriculturist, the Cincinnati Gazette, and Ayer's Almanac was each a *sine qua non* in the old farmhouse. My sympathetic uncle contended that as long as they had muddled the situation they should go the whole length and tell the Judd truth. He said that a boy had a right to two names; that he ought at least to have one discard. I recall how later he showed me how deftly he could make the entire OJL in one stroke and taught me how. And so O. J. came to be the current and only name, and only on rare occasions, such as in bowing down to an election judge or in signing a legal document, have I disclosed my real name.

My father at the time I was born owned one hun-

dred acres of thin, rocky, hilly Holmes County woodland, a little more than half cleared. Had he owned more he would have been still poorer. It has always been a mystery to me how my parents reared on their scanty income this family of five children decently and comfortably. My parents were both teachers. Both taught in the early 40's until the babies began to come, and my father taught winters most of the time into and through the Civil War period. He was a good teacher. He was strong on "keeping order." He taught the home school in the winter of 1866 and I was a pupil. I do not think I was an ideal one, for lessons were easy, and I did not always employ the surplus time as the teacher desired. I do not recall the particular act of devilment but, in order that he might not be accused of showing partiality, he once inflicted on me an unusual and disproportionate punishment. Not often did my mother resort to the lecture method, but this was one occasion of departure. She did a good job, and there was not one word offered in defense. Nor was there again any cause for it.

My father meant always to be just and kind, but he never erred on the side of kindness. His integrity was never questioned and he was in great demand by all who needed direction in such matters as estate settlements, account adjustments and petty legal matters. He was as well read as was possible in the pioneer environment. He had brains. Although self-educated he was recognized far and wide as a man of superior intelligence. He was one of a trio of young teachers who, denied the advantages of a formal schooling, under-

took singly and collectively to "dig in" for themselves. Each Saturday one winter these three student teachers, Andrew Laylander, Jackson Silcott and Robert Torbert, walked a dozen miles to take a weekly lesson from Edwin Oldroyd, an expert in surveying. These youths, untaught, had mastered the higher algebra and geometry. Young Silcott a little later became surveyor of Holmes County. He married my father's sister, one of the loveliest and kindest of women, and they both were formative influences in my life. Robert Torbert, too, came in for a share, but more indirectly as I shall relate later. They were all keen, bright, clear-thinking men.

My father greatly resembled his mother in many ways. He inherited her mental acuteness, courage and endurance. She lived to be ninety-four, able to read without glasses and to discourse intelligently and interestingly on the topics of the day. She had a fine memory and had the history of the period of her life at her tongue's end. She could quote pages and pages of Young's Night Thoughts, Paradise Lost and similar light literature. I fear she shortened her life smoking, for like most of the old ladies of her day, she was very fond of the little old clay pipe. Once, when I was eight or nine years old I thought to sample it. They picked me up unconscious at the foot of the barn stairs and carried me to bed. The cause of my illness was all too evident. When I came out of it I had no desire to experiment further, and attained full manhood before I smoked again. My grandmother lived six miles away and visits there were real events. The

house smelled of maple sugar. There were sugar cookies or real sugar always waiting. Then there was a real brook in the sugar orchard, and oh, so many things for children to do. Grandfather died before I was born. I have heard it said that although rather quiet, and inclined to keep his own counsel, he had a fine sense of humor as an offset to his extreme piety. At times he got his piety and temper somewhat mixed.

There was always a clearing on the farm carved out of the heart of the forest. One spring in the new clearing lay a huge green chestnut log which had defied the flames of the log heap. Twice, a third time, there had been kindled about it a great fire in efforts to reduce this last obstacle to breaking the new ground. At last grandfather gave it up. He went to the barn, yoked the sturdiest oxen, adjusted the great log chains and with difficulty dragged the stubborn giant far back into the woods. A neighbor unnoticed had followed the procession. Finally the old man after much twisting and pounding released the chains. Then he drew himself to full height, mopped his brow, delivered a forceful kick on the end of the rebellious log and exclaimed: "Now, damn you, lie there. The Good Book tells of a day you *will* burn I reckon!"

I do not know the genesis of my grandfather. I have never been able to trace the name definitely. It is uncommon, and outside of my father's immediate family and their descendants I have never met it. The nearest approach was only a short time ago. In my business correspondence was a letter signed "Matilda Laylander Johnson." I wrote her concerning her lineage.

She replied that she was born in Sweden but that her family name was Johnson and that in accordance with a custom there those who preferred a different name could assume one. She said there was a tradition that her great, great, great-grandmother was a charming and beautiful peasant girl, and that a foreign nobleman, whether French or Dutch she did not know, became enamoured of her and married her. So all through her life she had heard this name. The euphony pleased her, and choosing the name as her own, she came to America as Matilda Laylander. A little later she married a man by name of Johnson, so she had all her trouble for nothing. My only comfort is this: perhaps some of my own idiosyncrasies are mere blood bubbles of an interesting past. So there is no family tree, and no certain blue blood; there was however plenty of spinal column and so far as my investigations have gone something more than mere osseous enlargements for it to support. On both sides of the house my forbears were noticeably above the average in intelligence and in character. If their successors are lacking in this respect there must be a better excuse than heredity.

To my mother I am chiefly indebted for whatever in way of heart qualities I possess. She was tender, rather emotional, and her appreciation of the beautiful made a lasting impression on me. She was said to be a very attractive girl. I know she was peacefully beautiful in old age. She was talented for her times. She could dye and spin and weave in beautiful patterns. Practically all our linen, quilts, carpets and women's

clothing were the products of her hands. In my sight as I write is a priceless coverlet into which more than seventy-five years ago she worked a portion of herself. I can hear it speak, and the words are very sweet.

It is evident that my parents joined in giving me one of the best heritages that can come to any child: a strong body through which courses untainted blood and which bears no scars of wicked ancestral swords. Thus I started my long journey with one quality distinctly favorable to the attainment of contentment.

CHAPTER TWO

OUT OF BABYHOOD

My earliest recollection is an incident that occurred when I was a little more than three years old. Mother was going to the soldiers' picnic with my father and had to take me along. They sat in the one seat of the ramshackle one-horse buggy and I was stowed away at the side of a big basket in the box part in the rear. I recall that I had on a blue velvet coat with wonderful big smooth shiny soldier buttons. Everything else is blank. It must have been this same year that a second event made a dent. Fear fixed this one. I was having a picture taken and I was afraid of the big thing pointed at me in the high chair by a big man who stuck his head into a black box. I also remember that I couldn't understand why my sisters insisted on my saying over and over again: "me tired, hik, lazy, and peet cold," nor why they laughed. I did not know they were amusing themselves because little brother learning to talk, had previously explained that he was "all in," being tired, sick, lazy, and cold of feet.

Then a hiatus, for I must have been somewhat older, probably about six, when I ran away and hid because Preacher Brown was coming again. He always seized me, drew me toward him and solemnly asked: "Who made you, my son?" And I knew I had to say

The First Picture

The author at three

"God" and didn't want to. I had told him so often that I thought he ought to know. Hunger forced me to emerge for dinner but this time the preacher ignored me. He was thinking of more important things, for he had preached a "secesh" sermon and the Presbyterian church at Hopewell was being rent asunder. No use to try to work my father. Abolition was with him an integral part of the scheme of salvation. Reverend Brown had to go. I was glad when his visits ceased. I didn't like his solemn look and black clothes.

In June, 1863, when I was five years old there occurred an event that was indelibly impressed on my memory. One forenoon my father came rushing into the kitchen where my mother was at work, exclaiming: "The soldiers are coming to put down the rebellion at Napoleon. They are marching from Lakeville. I am going to join them at Nashville." Greatly excited, he and a neighbor climbed into the old buggy and hurried away. I didn't understand what it was all about, but I recall how glad my mother was. In later years I often heard my father relate the story of the fall of Fort Fizzle and I knew that my mother had real cause for joy, for she had feared for the safety of my father who was an enrolling officer in the unpopular draft. It was the organized resistance to this draft that constituted the Holmes County "rebellion." Under the inspiration of the Knights of the Golden Circle a thousand or more of the inhabitants had armed and proceeded to make it impossible for the enrolling officers to effect

registration. The United States marshal and posse succeeded one night in arresting the ringleaders but got only a mile or two before being overpowered, and the prisoners taken away from them. Then the authorities at Columbus got busy. So it was that the morning of June 17th Colonel William Wallace of the 15th Ohio, with "230 exchanged men from Camp Chase, 50 sharp shooters from Camp Dennison, 100 men of the Governor's Guard, and one section of Captain Neil's Battery" detrained at Lakeville, and proceeded to march the dozen miles to the hostile section.

And this was the cause of my father's haste. He was one of the large crowd hurrying to trail the soldiers and see the fun when the brave "Knights" should encounter a real attack. But alas, the spectators were doomed to disappointment. After a few shots the rebels abandoned their stone pile fort and the lonely howitzer, and started to run; and as my father would relate, "some of them are running yet." It is a matter of history that a few of the ringleaders could not be produced for trial as they had fled so promptly and so far as to make their capture impossible. Such of the leaders as remained were arrested and properly punished, and thus fell Fort Fizzle and thus ended the Holmes County insurrection.

I was the only boy in the family. There were three older sisters and one younger. Whether this was an advantage or a handicap I am not quite sure. The only rough play that small boys so enjoy was what I found at school. I had no chance to do most things

that boys so love. I never learned to skate for it was four miles to Odell's lake. There were no ponds on these farm hills. I couldn't swim in the watering trough, and it was two or three miles to a creek that only with damming could furnish a hole deep enough for the great annual event of sheep-washing. I was not permitted to have a gun until I was almost old enough to be a father. I learned to shoot nevertheless, and to care for a gun, for as often as possible I went to my cousins, the Gorrell boys, several miles away. They were experts in squirrel shooting and took great pleasure in schooling me in the art. I think my father's own boyhood had been so filled with toil that he had little conception of the uses of play. At all events play was not a part of the farm program. There was always so much work to be done. Too closely driven to employ outside help, except on the rarest of occasions, it fell to my sisters and to me to do much of the lighter work of the farm. Nor was it always so very light. Thus, in order to add to his income my father had a cane mill and made molasses for the community. My two sisters, girls in their early teens, for several seasons ran the mill. They carried in the heavy bundles of cane, fed the mill, removed the crushed stalks and saw to it that each lot had its proper juice conveyed to the evaporator directed by my father. I was a full hand at the plow and harrow before I was eleven years old. From carrying water to the harvesters I was promoted to dropping pinches of gypsum on the hills of growing corn, gathering sheaves, loading hay, hauling manure, and similar diversions. Yet only

when a job seemed to me to be endless or futile did I find it extremely irksome. Thus, there was no pleasure in gathering the stones from a field for there would be just as large a crop upturned by the next plowing.

One annual job assigned to me almost as soon as I could count straight was the planting of the pumpkin seeds. Armed with a sharp stick and a pailful of seeds, I was told to make the holes and drop the seeds in every fourth hill and every third row of the corn field. Once it seemed to me my father had furnished me seed enough for an entire farm. "How far shall I plant?" I asked. "Plant all day," was the curt reply. I was inwardly rebellious, for I knew half the crop would rot in the field. However I worked faithfully until noon. In the afternoon I had an idea. I would plant a little more than half the field and the remaining seeds I would throw on the immense stone pile at the side of the field, and spend the gained time loafing in the nearby big woods. The miserable telltale seeds caught in the shade and dampness of the stones, and to my horror there arose a veritable mountain of pumpkin vines. I expected a thrashing, but for once the humor of the situation appealed to my father, and he passed it by with a slight dig concerning my thoughtlessness. But the lesson stuck. All my life I have been careful about disposing of my pumpkin seeds.

Obey was one of the words whose meaning was clearly understood by us children very early. Strict obedience or swift punishment; we could take our choice. Once I erred. It was a boiling hot day in haying time. I was about twelve years old. The helper

for the day had failed to come and I had to serve in the haymow in his place. One of my sisters directed the old mare at the rope and pulley, while my father operated the unloading fork. My father had told me how to be ready to guide the huge bite in the mouth of the fork by pushing it mid-air just as he loosed the trigger. I thought I knew a better plan and was succeeding very badly in keeping the way open. The second time he told me how to proceed, I replied: "If you are so smart better come up and do it yourself." He said not a word. He climbed off the wagon, took the halter strap off old Nell, climbed the ladder into the seething mow and "did it himself." He did it so thoroughly that I was completely cured of any disrespect of speech to my parents ever after. There have been many times in my life when I have wished that certain fathers might be displaced temporarily by my own. The home is the earliest, the most common, and the most effective place for spoiling children. I am not regretting that my father was so strict; that I had only a trace of pleasure and a flood of toil in my boyhood days. One didn't need golf or gymnasium exercises those days. I see now that this early, hard, continuous work on the farm was building for me a constitution of unusual powers of resistance. I have no regrets. Youth is not the only playground. It is easy for the successful man to bring up the average later. "All work and no play" isn't half as hard on Jack as the modern tendency to all play and no work. As I see it now my father's attitude toward me was usually right. Even when he was wrong he was often right.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HILLSIDE HOME

In these Ohio hills the chief magnet to the home builder was the spring. Wells came later, but the first houses were located near the springs, and this was why the house in which I was born and reared was off the road, stuck on to a little shelf of a great hill, for here bubbled forth from the sandstone rock a wonderful unfailing spring, flowing through the broad trough of the spring house spotted with earthen crocks of all shapes and sizes, filled with milk and cream and butter; thence into the great tub that served as a watering place, through the barnyard and into the valley to join the hundreds of others on the long journey to the Ohio.

The house, half frame and half log, had two good-sized rooms on the ground floor, a combined kitchen and living room, and a "parlor." Off the kitchen a little "buttery." A back porch served as a dining room in warm weather. Over the kitchen was one room that served as a common bedroom for most of the family, while over the "parlor" were two bedrooms, one occupied by the older sisters; the other was the sacred spare bedroom, reserved for guests. The floors were covered with homemade rag carpets. In fact everything was homemade, for there was no money with which to purchase furnishings that it was possible to make at home. There were no maids in those days.

All the housework, including the care of the cows and milk, the family sewing, all the mending, labor incident to rearing a family of five, fell to my mother and to the girls as fast as they grew into it. As soon as the girls were old enough to teach they were employed in contributing to the income through this channel.

My mother's life was a round of toil. There was no time except for the nearest duty, and yet her life record might well excite the envy of her more ambitious successors of today. There is something refreshing in the memory of those long winter evenings when the great basket of carpet rags — the last use of clothes that could no longer be turned or shaped to fit the next in size — was brought down stairs while all hands joined in adding balls both great and small to the pile almost ready for the loom. My mother never worried over woman's wrongs nor plead for woman's rights. She was happy in her usefulness. What more is there to be said?

Often winter evenings while my sisters were helping my mother in the household work my father would direct me to read aloud for their and my own edification. I recall one incident that resulted in much discomfiture. In my reading I came to the words "Pius IX." I remarked that I couldn't pronounce the next word. "Spell it," responded an older sister. "P–i–u–s–i–x" I repeated. "Pussix" she replied, and pussix I called it as I continued the story. I did not understand the ensuing chorus of laughter for a long time. I was nicknamed "Pussix" and my heart was full of murder.

Our nearest neighbor was an old German cabinet-maker named Ernst Koehler. He made beautiful things, and I still have evidences of his handiwork. He was fairly well educated. One winter my father conceived the plan of having my sisters study German of evenings so that they might teach in the schools of the Amish settlement where higher wages were paid owing to the inability of the ordinary teacher to make himself understood by these German children. Ernst was drafted to direct the pronunciation, and my father the procedure. My father got the simplest beginning books, including German copy-books, and all hands had to learn both to read and write German. While I was too young to be more than a trailer I picked up a smattering and later I had little difficulty in reading the ordinary beginning books in German.

The home study of those days was no joke. My father was a good teacher and loved to see the mind sprout. I received a mental discipline that stood me well in hand in my later experiences. One winter my father insisted I should take up algebra at home, as no place was provided for it in the district school. I promptly rebelled. "All right," he said, "you can have your choice. Study algebra, or go with me to the barn every night and husk corn two hours!" We never had help enough to get all the corn husked in the fall, so the shocks were hauled into the barn and provided a steady job for bad days and night work. For one entire week I stubbornly took my lantern and joined in the husking. I saw that father meant

business, and that I had either to yield or work all winter. I yielded, and soon was much interested in the manipulations of x, y, and z under his skillful direction. Incidentally I noticed a great falling off in his own husking program.

Elsewhere I shall have more to say concerning the sort of education that characterized the old time school as compared with that of the present, and it will not be wholly complimentary to modern procedure.

Nor was it only the mental growth that was considered in this family of school teachers. Our moral and religious welfare was a constant care. Three things were taboo in our household: smoking, card-playing and dancing. And as for liquor it was sinful even to think of that. My father repeatedly advised me that whenever I developed any of these devilish tendencies I could move out and live at Starner's. The Starners were still farther down the social ladder than the first round; they were in the dirt on which the ladder stood — the last word in worthlessness and general cussedness. No threat was needed so far as the tobacco was concerned. Grandmother's pipe had been sufficient, but I thought it a little stiff to be limited to "authors" and dominoes, so I learned to play euchre at noons in a haymow not far from the schoolhouse where a few of the elect had a rendezvous, but I never owned any cards or carried any home. I was too awkward to learn to dance even had I dared. Liquor meant beer and whiskey. It did not include cider. Every fall a barrel or two of late making was rolled

into the barn. Nor did it take very long for it to become effective. Curiously enough my father never objected to my sampling the cider barrel to my heart's content. A gimlet and a rye straw was all the equipment necessary. Only once did I taste beer before I was a man. My father had sold the wool, always a notable event. After its delivery at the warehouse the buyer treated my father to a glass of beer. It was the only time I ever saw him take a drink and he threw away most of this one. I begged to taste it. A mouthful almost strangled me. The bitter stuff turned my stomach. As for whiskey I did not know what it looked like until I was a man.

Not that I was reared more strictly than most of my associates. These were the standards then current. It is true that after a lapse of over fifty years some of these restrictions seem now to have been unreasonable. Thus, all "games of chance" were forbidden, and yet what is life itself but very largely a game of chance. The playing card was regarded as an instrument of the devil. The fact that most games of cards are nothing but number games was not considered for a moment. Gamblers used cards; gambling was a sin, hence all games of cards were wicked. All this has changed. Today, if a man says that the intellectual diversion of auction bridge makes no appeal to him, a game which involves the keenest mental alertness, it is quite generally accepted by bridge players that either he is mentally dull or lazy, or he doesn't know what he is talking about. Undoubtedly many prefer recreation to be a sedative rather than a stimulant.

How in spite of my early training I came to be an inveterate smoker, and how I came to disbelieve much that I had learned about the use of alcoholic stimulants, I will relate later. Sufficient to say that after observation covering nearly sixty years, I am convinced that a much greater number eat their way to eternal glory than drink to eternal damnation.

I believe that the young people of my day were neither much better nor much worse than those of today. Neither precept nor example can greatly repress the tendencies of youth. We had the distinct advantage of being obliged to work, and there was less time for frivolity than in these days of idleness and luxury. Nevertheless many things were done furtively then that are done openly now. Thus, legs have ceased to be a curiosity. Sex questions are discussed as a matter of course. In the old days these discussions came to the country youth by the underground route. The village was a center for the circulation of vile pictures and vicious literature. I think the youths of those days were not less wise than their successors, but they did not flaunt their knowledge.

I have a little book entitled "No Pains, no Gains." It is an old-type Sunday School library book published in 1856 by the American Tract Society. Its interest lies in the inscription:

> "Presented to Orange Laylander for
> committing to memory the
> Shorter Catechism.
> By his Pastor James F. Holcomb
> October 1867."

I cite this to show the atmosphere of my boyhood life. My parents were strict Presbyterians. The Westminster Catechism was a proper prescription. Of course at nine years of age I was not expected to know what it was about. In fact I had not the slightest notion. I knew the answer to the first question was: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever," but I thought the "cheefend of man" was some hidden part like a liver or gizzard, and that only man had it, for the question said nothing about any "cheefend" in women. I hadn't the slightest idea what it meant to glorify and enjoy God. I learned that "Sin is any want of conformity to or transgression against the law of God." I could glibly define election, effectual calling, and all the essential doctrines of the Presbyterian church. I tried to remember it just long enough to get that book. They were not plentiful in those days.

It was different with my next task, and I was a little older. Again I won a prize, this time for reading the entire Bible. Although I had a hard time ploughing through the begats, and although I was somewhat surprised to find some words that I had not ever seen in print, yet child that I was, I found there was a certain swing to many parts of the old Testament, dramatic and poetic touches, that awakened a response. Then there were parts especially in the Psalms and Proverbs that I quite understood. At any rate there stuck in my memory enough that I acquired a fair stock of scriptural allusions. It is my regret that I was not compelled to commit to memory many of the choicest portions.

Sunday was strictly observed in our household as a holy day. There were no recreations, no levities, no worldly performances. There were frequently two services — a morning one at the village and an afternoon one at Hopewell, the other half of the church unit. The preachers usually dined or stayed all night with us. Each winter there was "protracted meeting" and outside preachers called in to assist. These meetings were prosy compared with the Methodist revivals at the other end of the village. I liked those much better. I loved to hear the thunderous "Yamen!" of old man Parsons, father of twenty-two, and the noisy demonstrations at the mourners' bench. Then there was always a crop of tough old backsliders to be converted annually and we boys would speculate on how long each would hold out against the season's siege. Rather mild entertainment all this, but fifty years ago there were no movies, no radio, little of interest socially outside of church and school, occasional spelling and singing schools, and rather tame parties, danceless and cardless.

We lived a mile and a half from church and Sunday school. It was usually my privilege to walk as there was not room enough for all in the family conveyance. A lovely walk in the summer. Through the orchard on the hill, into and out of the big woods, across the field to Klupp's gate, thence down the rocky highway to the church at the end of the line of straggling houses that constituted the village.

The Sunday school followed the sermon. It was well attended and it was a goodsized group of boys

and young men that each Sunday gathered at Klupp's gate on returning from church before dispersing in various homeward directions. These meetings were both more interesting and more lasting than those at the church. We little fellows listened to the fervent discussions of our elders, to much gossip, to questionable stories, to coarse humor, and often lingered up to the danger point of being punished for tardiness at dinner. We did not hunger and thirst after righteousness; we were interested chiefly in the widening horizon of experience that opened through contact with these older boys and wise young men.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE HIGHLAND SCHOOL

OUTSIDE the family circle the most potent factor in my boyhood development was the old Highland district school. Our community was thickly populated and above the average in intelligence. The patrons demanded and usually got the best teachers available.

The winter term of four or five months was well attended. There was usually one class for each reader from primer to fifth reader; two classes each in spelling and arithmetic; one each in grammar and geography. There was necessarily much repetition of the text year by year. I know that I "went through" Pinneo's Grammar four times. I knew every rule, exception and sentence in it from "Aaron Burr was a traitor" to "Hail, Holy Light." I could analyze every sentence and parse every word in the book; but I never was asked to write a composition of any sort, or make any written use of what we studied. We gathered up enough books from various sources one term to supply the class and similarly to go through the more difficult Greene grammar, and the next winter the Harvey. Measured in terms of modern teaching it was a great waste of time. Not so then. These studies afforded endless opportunities for discussion as to the real meaning of words and sentences, and incidentally we acquired a power of analysis that later was very valuable.

The geography was wholly place geography. It was years before there was any study of geography as it is understood today. Our chief interest centered in spelling, reading, and arithmetic. In the spelling classes were "head-marks," occasional prizes, and, best of all, contests with neighboring schools. I learned McGuffey's Spelling Book by heart, and today I can yet see just how the pages looked, and repeat column after column in order. Something in that for the expert teachers of spelling today to ponder over. In reading we were limited to one series — the McGuffey. Indeed I was almost a man before I knew that there were any other readers. The result was that we read the books over and over. The reading was all oral. We vied with each other in intonation, in inflection, in interpretation. We thundered Rienzi's Address to the Romans, Spartacus to the Gladiators, Webster's Reply to Hayne, and all the fine selections that characterized these choice readers. We committed to memory and "spoke" dozens of the pieces that we most liked. The books were filled with wisely selected literary gems. There were no libraries, no supplemental books in those days. McGuffey was our all, and constituted the only study of English literature open to us. Many of the selections bore particularly on conduct, and the "moral" that followed many a tale made lasting impressions. I have heard many men of my age praise these old books and compare their successors disparagingly with them. It was not the readers *per se* but the use to which they were put that made them so memorable.

Many better school readers have been published since, but none have ever been so singly studied as these. Today in the vast mass of reading matter in which children are immersed little sticks. It is probable that fifty years from now none will remember any reader he is now using.

It was in the arithmetic class, however, that one's standing as a "scholar" was established. It was a great joy to me when I came to the realization that I could solve every problem in Ray's Third Part, including "The One Hundred Examples," and sought new worlds to conquer. My chum in school was Elisha Loomis, until recently in the faculty of the Cleveland West High. He was four years older than I, but lacked the home teaching I had, so we were in the same classes. He had been "bound out" for board and clothes to a highly respected and intelligent farmer. He was better in the subject of arithmetic than I and a constant spur to activity.

One of the prerequisites in the teacher was the ability to "keep order." As an incentive to proper conduct, on a rack on the wall back of the teacher's desk there were usually four or five good rods. I know they were good for I not infrequently sampled them. True, an occasional teacher omitted this Exhibit A. I recall one, a Mr. Seeley, a theological student, who "used moral suasion" instead. He had a stoppage in his speech. We were fruitful in finding new ways to disturb him, for we knew that they would bring only the remonstrance "Now, b-b-boys, d-d-don't." School that winter was one grand picnic. It was with a realiza-

tion that things would be different that we heard the announcement that the new teacher was to be David Torbert, from Berea College, the son of Robert Torbert, himself far famed as a teacher, and the best "corner ball" player in the township. The fact that the elder Torbert was a lifetime friend of my father's interested me in the son; but it was not until years after that I came to realize that David Torbert was my benefactor. David Torbert was a natural teacher. He was the first to teach me how to study. He made study so interesting, was so gifted and kind, that there was no need of other discipline. This was one of my last terms in the district school. He impressed Elisha Loomis and me with the necessity of continuing our studies in higher schools. Elisha was steered into Berea, and I elsewhere as I shall relate. David Torbert guided us into the mysteries of Ray's Higher Arithmetic. He kept our interest at fever pitch by constantly giving us problems outside the text, problems often of the puzzle sort, and just beyond our circle of acquired knowledge. Thus, he gave us the diameters of three equal circles touching each other, and required the area of the space bounded by the three sectors. Not so easy for one who had no knowledge of geometry and no preparation but "Mensuration" in Ray's Third Part. It was a mutual joy when we finally solved the problem and knew we were right.

We had learned the rule for finding the area of a triangle having the three sides given: "*Add the three sides and take half the sum. From the half sum subtract the three sides separately, multiply the half sum and the*

three remainders together and extract the square root of the product." Once in practice he gave us the dimensions of the three sides as 20, 30, and 50. We couldn't get the correct answer (which he withheld) for a long time; for in applying our well-known rule we had overlooked that the product of any number and zero would be zero, and that there could therefore be no triangle with these dimensions. It was a lesson in carefulness we never forgot. David Torbert tolerated none of the hit or miss (often miss) style that characterizes modern teaching. We studied comparatively few things but we learned them. He started me on the road of correct thinking that served me well in my life encounters. Whatever of success I have had I attribute first to this man, who thus early impressed me with the necessity of doing things right and inspired me with confidence to attack any problem, no matter how hard it appeared at the outset. He encouraged me to take the county teachers' examination, for he knew I must soon teach if I were to go away to school, as I should be obliged to pay my own way. I was only fifteen but looked much older. I felt sure of my ground and wrote the examination confidently. Only one question bothered me. It was in grammar. Among sentences to be corrected was this one: "He married a Jew." I had not had much acquaintance with Jews and unfortunately didn't recognize that the question was a matter of gender. I thought I had to do something with the sentence so I suggested: "He married a few." My notice came back "Failed in grammar." The examiner thought I was trying to play with him

and decided to discipline me. I was more careful the next month and in due time was fully armed with a teacher's certificate.

Nevertheless school days were not all work. The school was the safety valve for activities repressed at home. I fear I was somewhat of a thorn in the flesh of most of my teachers. I was full of mischief, and as I prepared most of my lessons at home nights and hence was not obliged to do much work at school, I received a full quota of the punishments allotted to disturbers. I recall one teacher whose stock punishments for such minor offences as "laughing out loud" and "whispering" were standing on the floor or sitting on the girls' side. I had a seatmate, whose name was George Thompson. George was tall, gawky, freckled, sandy-haired and very bashful. He couldn't suppress a snicker any more than a sneeze, so under my instigation he was continually breaking the rule and "laughing out loud" and so was obliged as a punishment to stand on the floor in front of the school for a half hour. George wore a roundabout, tightly fitted, fastened with a row of small, closely set brass buttons extending from the Adam's apple to the equator. At these times, hanging his head, he would almost invariably seize the sides of the garment next to the lower button, which yielding, set off the entire row in an audible vr-r-r-r-t. Then he would button them all up only again to touch off the whole row. This scene was so full of fun for me that over and over I got him into the predicament. I was then about twelve years old, afflicted with a chronic case of that delightful

The Country Schoolmistress

His first love

condition known as puppy love. My teacher was not a keen observer or he might have detected that many of my capers were prompted by the hope of being obliged to sit on the girls' side! One day my efforts were fully rewarded, for I was seated exactly behind my beloved Martha, and her auburn curls trailed over the McGuffey page at "Abhor, annul, construct." At an opportune moment I took out my jack knife, sawed off a ringlet, put it in a mud spattered old yellow envelope, and tenderly tucked it into the inside pocket of my roundabout, close to my heart. When I went home I hid it in the barn — that was safer — and Saturdays and Sundays I would take it out and kiss it, and wonder whether the angels above were as beautiful as my beloved Martha. But, alas, one night at singing school, as the "beaux" lined up at the door, and stuck out their bended elbows as an invitation to "see you home," I saw my Martha, — she was sixteen — take the arm of a twenty year old man who owned a horse and buggy, and pass out into the night. I stumbled home. There was a lump in my throat. I couldn't sleep. I wanted no breakfast. My mother thought I had "caught something and was coming down ill." I certainly had, and this my sudden awakening to the fact that Martha's ways were no longer my ways, wounded me far more deeply than many more serious experiences in later years. Not long ago I saw Martha, a grandmother in at least six directions, broad, crooked, grimy, wrinkled. She remarked "I hain't saw you for over forty years." I will say this for her: she had not bobbed her hair!

But Martha was by no means my first love. That distinction belongs to the young woman who taught the school the last summer I was permitted to attend even part time, for I was eleven, old enough to plow corn. I surmise now that Miss Geiselman was an ordinary, unshapely, sawed-off Dutch girl through whose pores oozed the essence of ten thousand sausages, not on too familiar terms with soap and water, nor possessed of any particularly attractive facial features; but with a soft voice, and tender smile. She thought I was smart. When she leaned over me to help me in my "ciphering" I wanted to kiss her. She was genuinely sorry that I had to stay out and work, and when I would see her emerge from the woods into the open road on her way to school, I would let Nell — the old mare — rest at the end of the corn row until the teacher came along, and her smile and greeting helped me to forget the heat of the field.

Another pleasing diversion in the neighborhood life was the adjunct to the school known as the Highland Literary. Here weekly through the winter the young and the old met to listen to selected readings, recitations, original speeches, once a month the school paper, and best of all for young Loomis and me, the debates. In these the schoolmaster would lock horns with the local experts. He encouraged Loomis and me to participate on opposing sides as seconds to these old warriors. It was fine discipline. We had no libraries from which to gather material; we had to think the questions through, learn to present our ideas forcefully, and to find the holes in our opponents'

armor. I doubt if there are many elementary schools today that can offer so good practice. I love to think of that old crew of debaters. There was Alex Campbell, who thought in polysyllables; Ab Ligget, solitary, silent, said to be an infidel, a quasi-philosopher who emerged from his shanty only on such rare occasions as these debates; Mike Booth, the verbal Dempsey, famous for miles around; Allen Garrett, an old teacher, naturally intelligent and the best-read man, as well as one of the most successful coon hunters in the community. And there was, too, Uncle Sammy Bonar, in appearance a cross between Ichabod Crane and Abraham Lincoln. Although he crucified the English, and saw few books outside the bible, which he knew from cover to cover, yet in action he was no easy foe, for he had a logical mind and spoke with great earnestness. Then there were the challengers from nearby fields.

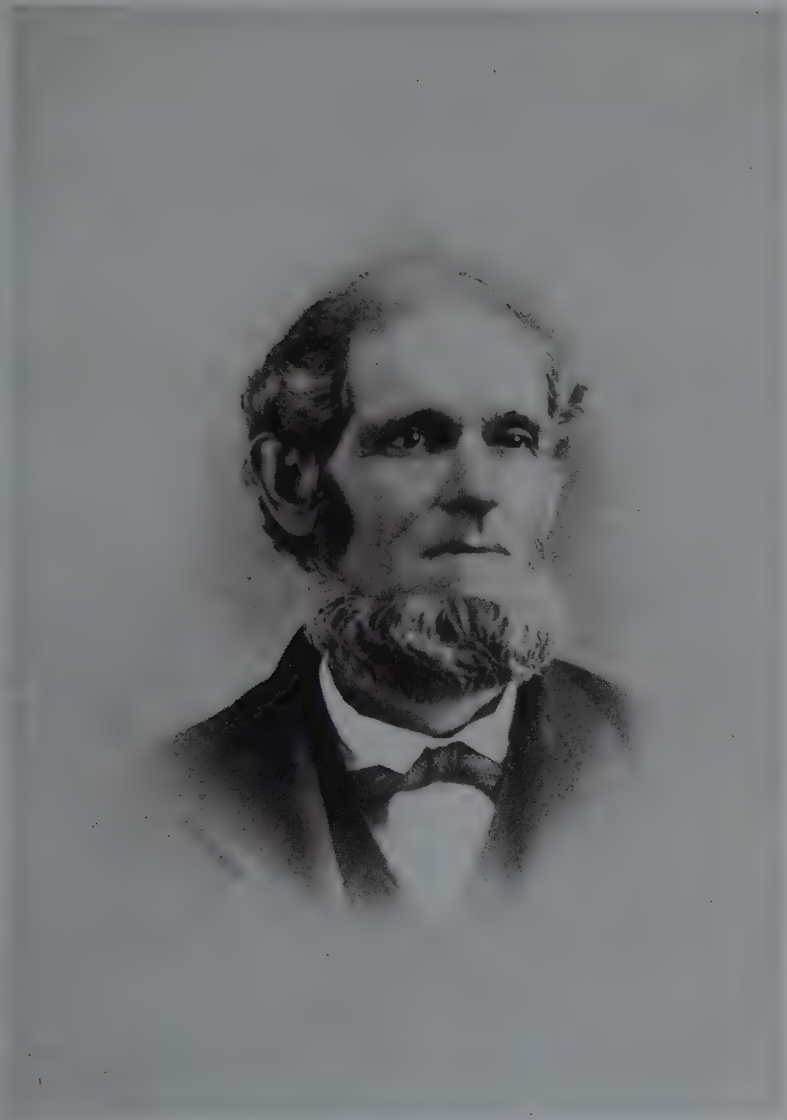
One night the subject announced for debate was: "Resolved that apparition is real." For the affirmative Mr. Samuel Bonar and Elisha Loomis. For the negative Allen Garrett and O. J. Laylander.

Uncle Sammy was in clover, for was there not the witch of Endor and a wealth of biblical illustrations to fortify his position? He knew that Bonar and the bible made a combination that the honorable judges could not ignore.

He opened confidently. His black eyes fairly blazed beneath shaggy brows and his long claw-like arms waved in emphatic gestures. We were whipped in advance unless something was done to break the spell.

We knew Uncle Sammy's chief weakness: his train of thought must not be broken. Uncle Sammy was no Noah Webster and words often gave him great trouble. Thus on this occasion he persisted in calling "apparition" apparatus. I saw an opening. He had rounded out a third period when I hastily conferred with my leader. I would call Uncle Sammy to order, deflect his attention, and trust to his inability to resume. "State your point of order," said the chairman. "He is not talking to the question," I responded. "It is apparition, not apparatus, that is the subject of debate." "The point is not well taken," ruled the chairman. "Mr. Bonar, proceed." But it was too late. The charm succeeded. He floundered a minute or two and sat down in disgust. The debate continued. The judges decided unanimously in favor of the affirmative. Didn't Mr. Bonar have the bible on his side, and anyway wasn't it presumptuous for a young upstart to call him to order? I think it was.

The old school was soon to become but a memory, for sterner things awaited. Tom Taylor, stooped and bewhiskered, would no longer call "a body of musketeers" a body of *muskeeters*, nor read of the "gifts that damnation bestows" when the book said "Dame Nature bestows." Sylvanus Klup, who smelled of the family goats, was also attending his last term. Wib McLaughlin would never again threaten to lick my chum Loomis. The years were calling us. The next winter was to find me installed as a teacher at the Fairview school four miles away. That was to be the beginning of the end of my Ohio days.



The Champion Debater

Uncle Sammy Bonar

This cub period was far from dull. My inherent spirit of mischief found many an outlet. I recall an incident that occurred when I had turned fourteen years that afforded diversion for several months. My oldest sister, Alice, had been married for some time and had gone west to live. One day a letter came addressed to "Miss Alice Laylander," bearing the postmark of a college town a hundred miles away. On opening the letter my sisters found it was from a college student, who explained he had accidentally run across the name, was pleased with it, and had the temerity to ask the young lady to correspond with him. I begged my mother to let me reply to it as it was evidently a college prank, and I wanted to share the fun. So I replied over my sister's name and accepted his proposal. He was a good letter writer, and it afforded me excellent practice to try to answer in kind. After a few missives he proposed an exchange of photographs. I robbed the family album of the picture of a fine looking acquaintance and received what purported to be his in return. Soon his letters began to grow somewhat amorous, and my own were not wholly unfailing in imagination. All went merrily for some months. Then one day came a letter stating he would be going home on vacation in a few days, and on the way would like to visit me and meet my family. This was going a little farther than I had expected. Up to this time my father had not known of my doings. I decided I would better tell him and seek his advice. His response was that it looked as if I was liable to get the trouncing I so justly deserved unless I promptly

headed off the intended visit by making a clean breast of it. I hastened to return the young man his picture with full explanation that his love was a fourteen year old imp who would not be at home if he called. He did not reply.

This mischievous tendency asserted itself frequently in later life with variations, and I am not at all sure it is all out of my system yet.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXODUS

DURING the 70's there was a school not far from Cincinnati that attracted wide attention. It was The National Normal School of Lebanon, Ohio, presided over by Alfred Holbrook. Professor Holbrook contended that the colleges were an expensive luxury; that under proper teaching students could do in two years the work for which the colleges took four years. He undertook to demonstrate this in his school. His work and methods were fully exploited in the Cincinnati Gazette. It made a strong appeal to my father who had acquired a very fair education without any teacher. He decided to send to Lebanon my two older sisters, supplementing, as best he could, their savings from two or three years of continuous teaching. They boarded themselves, living in utmost frugality, and secured their diplomas. They demonstrated that some of professor Holbrook's claims were justifiable. My father thought he was dealing quite liberally with the girls when he sent them each ten dollars for extraordinary expense at graduation time.

Naturally, Mr. Holbrook associated with him some unusually strong teachers. Two of the most talented of his faculty were O. P. Kinzie and H. N. Carver. Allured by the popularity of the Lebanon school these men determined to launch upon similar enter-

prises. Kinzie took with him H. B. Brown and founded the Valparaiso Normal School. Carver chose Medina, Ohio, as the seat of his experiment.

In the meantime, young Loomis was writing of his fine experiences at Berea, and urging me to hasten into some school. I naturally gravitated towards Medina, although my mother much preferred that I go to the new Presbyterian University of Wooster, with a hidden hope, I fear, that I might emerge a Presbyterian preacher.

I went to Medina, and a new heaven and new earth opened up to me. Plenty of books, association with bright-minded older men and women, and above all Professor Carver. Here was to be another noticeable formative influence in my life. Carver was more than a teacher; he was a notable scholar, and possessed an unusual personality. He impressed us with the fact that in the matter of learning the battle was to the strong. He went outside of and beyond textbooks. He introduced us to Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Spencer. He inspired us with utter fearlessness in study. He gave us glimpses of the beauty of poetry and instilled a desire to know intimately the masterpieces of literature. My contact with this man led me into habits of thought that were to serve me well in my adventures into the realm of books in after years.

In the meantime, I taught the Fairview School and saved my money. I boarded at home. It was a four mile walk, and as I had to feed the stock and do the farm chores before breakfast, it meant early rising. Occasionally on very stormy days I was permitted to

use one of the farm horses, but for the most part they were reserved for better use than to carry a vigorous young man to work. I was not yet sixteen when I taught my first school, although I appeared much older.

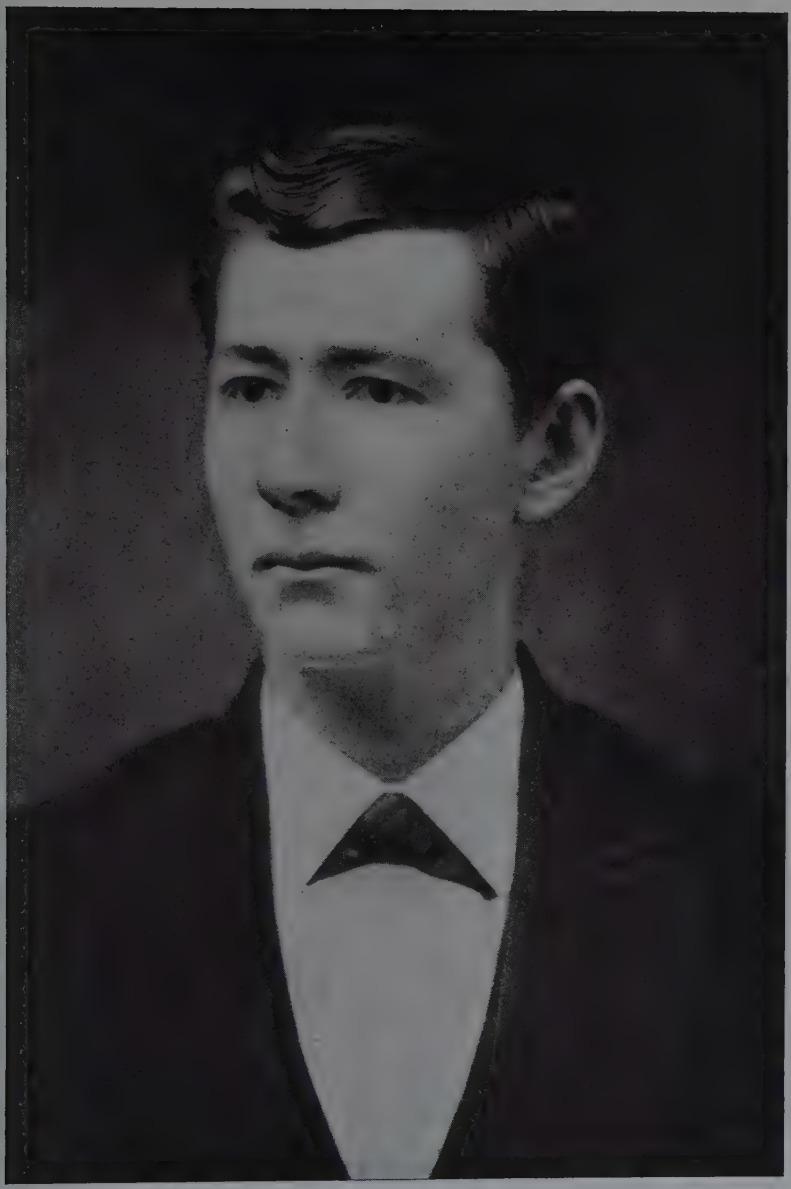
I never had money to spend foolishly. With my first dollar I bought from a neighbor a freshly weaned scrub calf. It was "my calf" although my father furnished the feed, and when it grew into a pretty poor specimen of steer, he sold it and applied the proceeds on the purchase of a pony. My joy was complete. God pity the man who never had a pony or a dog. One need begot another. I had to have a saddle. This particular year the peach orchard of five hundred trees actually produced a good yield. If there is anything fuller of disappointment than an Ohio peach tree, I have not met it. It always has an excuse for failing to perform. This year all the hazards of frost, insects and hail were passed. The crop had to be marketed chiefly at Wooster, sixteen miles away. My father permitted me to accompany him and to sell "by the piece" from the wagon a bushel basketful of choice selections, while he peddled the regular load. In the course of the season I acquired the necessary amount for a saddle and bridle, and for a couple of years I had real enjoyment. Meantime, I was growing, and as it cost as much to keep the "calico" pony as a real horse the pony was disposed of.

During the three or four years preceding my engagement at Fairview important events were occurring that were to turn the current of my life. My father

had been "out west," clear into Iowa, by rail as far as Davenport, by stage and afoot into the interior. An uncle had "entered" two hundred and forty acres of Iowa land. It was too far away to interest him so he offered it for sale at five dollars per acre. In some way my father raised the money and bought the land. I think after investigation my father regretted that he couldn't buy the whole state, for he foresaw that this great garden was on the verge of coming into its own. Thus was I immersed in talk of the great west and was early filled with a desire to see the Indians, the buffalo bones, the prairie chickens, the gophers, and all the strange things of the prairie.

I am sure my father early hoped that they had not dubbed me Orange Judd for nothing, and that one day I would develop into a real farmer on the stumpless and stoneless Iowa acres, whose deep, black soil was waiting to be tickled with the plow. And so I went to the Normal School at Medina, dropping out to teach as my funds ran low, but determined at the earliest possible day to go to Iowa and look over the prospects. It happened in March, 1876. I was eighteen years old, weighed one hundred and sixty pounds, and was in perfect health. I had never before been farther from home than Cleveland, sixty miles away, and there once only. A party of Medina students had obtained a special dispensation to go to Cleveland to see Lawrence Barrett in Hamlet. I had never seen a theatre, so I had somewhat guiltily joined them, although I knew my parents would have disapproved.

I had a meager supply of clothing those days. I had



The Fairview Teacher

The author at sixteen

never worn an undershirt nor an overcoat. Home-made flannel shirts produced sufficient friction to counteract the winter's cold. It was a very green boy who headed that March day for the Great West, but he didn't know it. His mother did, and it nearly broke her heart, for she knew despite the declaration that it was only for the summer and I would be back for the fall term of school, that I, her only boy, a mere babe, was in reality leaving her forever.

I did come back in the fall, and I did come back to her every year for the twenty-five years that she lived.

CHAPTER SIX

ON THE PRAIRIE

I LOVE to go back in memory to my first summer in Iowa in the seventies. The prairie was yet largely unspoiled. The wire fence, the straight road, all the marks of mine and thine were yet infrequent. The prairie road like a great serpent wound its black length from divide to divide and disappeared in the flowered distance. One could gaze to his heart's content on nature's great green gown studded with the scarlet lily and the wild rose, heritages of an infinite Past. It was pleasant to see the gray dawn entering with flaming banners of crimson and gold, marching to the love notes of the prairie grouse and the mourning doves. One could sense the sweet redolence of the wild apple and the hawthorn in the sheltered thickets of the occasional hillock. One could feast one's eyes on the great billowy expanse seemingly bounded only by the meeting sky. Here and there some sturdy pioneer had made real invasion, planted a grove of quickly growing trees, and under its shelter erected a rude house and thatched stable. Far apart were the few fairly comfortable houses of the earliest comers. All this was to change very rapidly. The first settlers stuck to the wooded streams. Later a few pushed out into the open prairie allured by the deep black soil, and the broad acres at once tillable

without the labor incident to woodland clearing. They demonstrated how comparatively easy it was to succeed. In a short time settlers swarmed. From New York, Ohio, New England, there came a steady stream. The immigration bureaus were busy. Throngs came from Norway and Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Germany. Prosperity was in the air. The pioneer was passing. Iowa was in the making.

A few miles distant from the portion of the prairie that was for some years to be my home, the boy Herbert Quick was battling with poverty, trying to fit himself to teach a country school. He did not know that these harsh experiences of youth were being absorbed only to blossom forth a little later in those inimitable stories of the prairie, Vandermere's Folly and The Hawkeye. Quick's "Story of One Man's Life" is not only a true record of this period, and hence especially appreciated by those who knew it, but it teems with inspiration for all who believe that what we call success is chiefly attributable to industry, ambition, and self-denial.

A few miles in the other direction was another boy whose pen was to make him famous. Emerson Hough was just an average small town boy and did the usual things. But he was well bred and had an imagination sensitive to the thrilling events of the near Past, and he too was to contribute to the delights of thousands in his stirring stories of prairie days. It was pathetic that he started on the long journey just on the eve of the success of his great picture "The Covered Wagon."

Although both these men became my good friends,

it was not until the lines crossed in later years that we discovered that we had been almost neighbors in young manhood.

My purpose in writing somewhat in detail of this period is not because of any intrinsic interest in the events recorded, but rather to illustrate how powerful are the formative influences in the plastic period of youth, and how comparatively insignificant events change the whole current of life. I had only a vague conception of what awaited me on that prairie. I did not know that I was entering Knocks College with its multitude of courses and instructors, and was to get a sort of education not given in any ordinary institution of learning. I was in my nineteenth year, isolated by hundreds of miles from any parental direction or control, without a single acquaintance of any sort, forced to make my own decisions, to fight my own battles, to learn my lessons as best I could. I had scarcely any capital except health and optimism, but I had no fears and I champed on the bit.

I deemed the year of my exodus from Ohio of sufficient importance to keep a diary, and thus it is that I know that it was the twenty-first day of March, 1876, that I boarded the afternoon train of the Pittsburg, Fort Wayne and Chicago railway for Chicago, thence directly over the Chicago and Northwestern to Belle Plaine, Iowa. I did not ride in a sleeping car for two reasons, one of which was sufficient: I couldn't afford it. The other was that I never had seen the inside of a sleeping car, and would have been too timid to explore. Not that I had no money. I had three hun-

dred dollars of perfectly good money, drawn only the day before from the treasurer of the Fairview school, but none of this was to be wasted on luxuries. It wouldn't go very far in the purchase of the farm equipment. I believe that the C. & N. W. had not yet installed dining cars, for this train stopped at Dixon, Illinois, for dinner and Lowden, Iowa, for supper. It did not reach Belle Plaine until ten at night, a twelve hour ride. The Overland Limited had not yet been born. I stayed all night at the Sherman House, a typical early Iowa village hotel. I recall how dreadfully I was shocked on going into the "office" after breakfast to see a five year old boy wreathed in smoke from a huge pipe on which he pulled industriously. I rather expected to see him drop dead on the spot. I found that he was no novice. "Allus done it" explained the bus man. The boy had no notion of dying, for, as I learned years afterwards, he grew up to be a successful farmer, had a large family, and always voted the straight Republican ticket. That is, he became a perfectly normal Iowa citizen.

As I went out on the street a strange sight met my eyes. Down the entire length of Main Street was a close line of wagons with double boxes, all filled with wheat. The drivers were awaiting their turn to dump the wheat into the elevators. Never had I seen so much wheat, nor did I know it was ever marketed anywhere except in sacks as in Ohio. I wondered where it all came from.

I was keen to see what awaited me, and did not linger long in the village. Leaving my trunk at the

hotel I packed my bag and set out afoot across the bushy bluffs beyond, three or four miles to the edge of the prairie. I was filled with wonder. Reared among the shut-in Ohio hills I was amazed to find it was possible to see so far. I had the impression of looking over a great white sea dotted by black islands. The recent snowfall had melted about the widely separated spots that were marked as farmhouses by groves and curling smoke. Here and there great strips of breaking, where the snow had not caught, lay in bleak blackness. I did not know that the earth could be so black. A mile or so ahead of me a place stood out so prominently that I recognized it from my father's description as the house of the Montgomery brothers, sturdy Scotchmen who had been real pioneers of the prairie. A large house and good barn, a grove of tall trees, and the finest farm in the entire region. On one of my father's trips he had visited the place. I was not long covering the distance, for I was hungry, and I knew these kindhearted people would give me a warm welcome and an invitation to dinner. Nor was I disappointed. Fortunately another visitor, Mr. Malcolm, was there, and as he lived in the direction in which I was going, my trudge across the prairie was shortened by a welcome ride of three miles with him. He was genuinely interested in my adventure and gave me a lot of good advice. I left him, feeling that I had made a real friend, and such he proved to be.

My objective point was the home of Robert Lavender four miles beyond. Mr. Malcolm pointed out the grove in the distance, and I started for it in a straight

line. He assured me that the frozen sloughs had not yet yielded to the sun so I need not avoid them. Incidentally I had acquired a new word. He called it "slew." The only "slough" that I knew was the Slough of Despond, and it was pronounced to rhyme with "cow." It is interesting to note that it was several years before the dictionaries yielded to western usage and gave "slough" its proper pronunciation.

In the late afternoon I arrived at my destination. Robert Lavender owned the 80 adjoining my father's tract. He was one of the earliest settlers on this beautiful, broad, rolling prairie and he had a fairly comfortable house, a good grove, and amply thatched stables. The house was practically in the stable yard and the stock came to the very doorsteps. These kind-hearted thrifty people had emigrated from the north of Ireland into what was to them little short of heaven. It had been arranged that I should board here during my initiation. Anticipating my going my father the previous year had engaged Mr. Lavender to "break" forty acres and sow it to wheat. The portion that remained of my father's share, after building a granary in which to store it, was made a part of my working capital.

I found to my delight that we were on the edge of a district of considerable population. The schoolhouse had been located on our land, and a couple of miles distant was a new church. The representatives of the various sects for miles around had met in conference, reduced themselves to a common denominator, and decided on a Congregational Church, all except

Robert Lavender. He had not carried his Presbyterianism all the way from Belfast for nothing, so Sundays, regardless of roads or weather, he drove eight miles to Brooklyn where there was a real church. I sampled the local product and found it to my liking. Too poor to support a minister the pulpit was supplied from Iowa College at Grinnell, twenty-five miles away. The little church seemed to be the one oasis in our social desert. Nor did I overlook the fact that the young lady who played the second-hand organ and led the singing looked promising.

Spring was hurrying to the prairie. I had little time to lose. I must provide myself with a team and wagon and the minimum equipment of farm utensils for the work awaiting me; wheat to be sown, part of the wheat land planted to corn, and another 40 to be broken. Horses were scarce. My new friend Mr. Malcolm decided to let me have a fine young mare "at a great bargain." I scoured the country for a mate, and after some days made a purchase. I found to my sorrow that I had been swindled. The horse was balky and put to the first test refused to pull a pound. When I returned the horse to the former owner he refused to take him back. "All right," I said, "do as you please, but you would better consult a lawyer. I am a minor. If you know what that means you would better return my money right now, for the horse stays here." Glowering, he handed me the money, and I scored in my first round in the Iowa ring. I renewed my search and within a few days was the proud possessor of a real team.

I was intoxicated with the novelty of the scene. The smell of the prairie was invigorating. New plants, new forms of animal life abounded. A half mile or more away in a secluded portion of the open prairie overlooked by my bedroom window was a famous roosting ground for the prairie chickens. In the spring mornings during the mating season I could lie at break of day and hear the continuous "boom," "boom," "boom" of the scores of cocks strutting in proud array before the rather indifferent hens in noisy attempts to win the affections of their prospective mates. I was interested to find paths worn bare by the wings of the amorous suitors, tracks of the years.

Then there were acres and acres of wild flowers, splashes of color on these billowy folds that added beauty to the short-lived panorama. All too soon would the fair face of the prairie be cut into long black gashes by the sharp steel of the breaking plow, and waving fields of wheat, wheat, wheat mark the passing of the world-old turf. Poetry a plenty, but more of prose as the season progressed, for it was early evident to me that my little stock of last year's wheat would not provide me with sufficient funds for the summer. The wheat was extremely inferior in quality. The region had been infested with chinch bugs with the result that fully half the kernels were shriveled and worthless. It had all to be screened, and the remaining portion barely graded "rejected," the lowest class to be marketed at any price. This, after being drawn eleven miles to the mart yielded sixty cents a bushel.

But with the farmer it is always "to be about to be." Next year would surely be better.

I was limited in my purchases of farm utensils to the absolutely essential, relying upon hiring from neighbors the more expensive ones. One of my first blunders was in connection with my corn planting. There was a scarcity of seed. Tests disclosed that much of the corn that had been set aside for seed was worthless. I would not court failure. I would take no chances. I would import seed from the old Ohio home. It grew all right, but not in the "corn belt" way. I had overlooked the fact that even corn must be acclimated. My field of short stalked, small eared corn which had the audacity to ripen nearly a month ahead of its neighbors, was the subject of many derisive comments that took some tuck out of the sails of the young farmer from Ohio. Even this incident was not without its advantages, for I knew that every day cut off my stay in the fall would make it easier for me to catch up with my class at Medina, and I could not return to Ohio until the corn was harvested. And so the summer whirled by: corn planting, haying, harvesting, threshing and the ever waiting ploughing. It was full of privations and a plentiful lot of bad luck, but on the whole extremely satisfying and I half regretted that my program demanded that I should return to Ohio for the school year. I longed most of all for the old Ohio spring with its gushing stream of soft water. I had scarcely felt clean all summer long. I could not get used to the hard water of the Iowa well and the ever present mud that

stuck closer than a brother. One sword dangled over my head throughout this sojourn: in the short-cut school at Medina we were expected to get enough of both Cæsar and Cicero in one year to enable us to work out our own salvation. I had no fear that I could not enter my class six weeks late in any other branch, but I had a poor start in Latin, and Cæsar without any teacher, with the text of the day barren of helps, with exceedingly adverse conditions of study, was not an inviting program. I was too green to know that there was such a thing as an "interlinear," so there was no course open but to do it. Rainy days, nights, the noon hour, all were employed in this miserable task. I had a rack fastened to the plow handle and carried my Cæsar to the field to snatch occasional moments when resting my horses. And I did it. Indeed I was quite elated to find very few of my class any more able to cope with new difficulties than I.

The time had come when I must return to Ohio. I had no difficulty in getting a place for my team to earn their "board and keep" until I should return the next summer. In the meantime I arranged for the next year's crops "on shares." My journey to Ohio proved to be quite eventful. Here I am obliged to confess that I had a sweetheart, at least one. She was a very estimable young classmate, who, like myself, had to drop out and earn money to continue in school. In this particular fall of 1876 she was teaching school in Hooppole Township, Posey County, Indiana, down at the tip of the state's great toe. I decided to go back

that way. Armed with a ticket to Cincinnati, forty dollars in cash, and a little present for the girl in the way of a ten dollar ring I set out on my journey.

Even under ordinary circumstances October in southern Indiana is alluring, and regretfully I cut my visit to two days; but the school was calling and I hastened homeward. The ring was too large. This was fortunate, as later experiences disclosed. I had to take it with me to get it reduced.

I returned to the main line of the old O. & M. at Vincennes and boarded a train for Cincinnati. Not until the evening lights on the Walnut Hills announced the approach to the city did I discover that while I had slept in my seat in the coach my pocketbook had been stolen. I had left in my trousers' pocket exactly fifty cents and the ring. It cost me a quarter to have my trunk transferred, so I landed at the Little Miami Station with visible funds of one quarter of a dollar. I was very, very green. I was entirely ignorant of commercial practices and the proper procedure in such an emergency. I saved my quarter for more important needs than food and slept in my seat in the station. In the morning I went to the nearest policeman and told him my story. He advised me to consult the station master. This official scanned me and asked me to show him my watch. He looked somewhat amusedly at the little old key-winding, German silver watch of the vintage of 1846, which my father had carried before I was born. "Haven't you anything of any value about your person?" he asked. I produced the ring and told him

how I happened to have it. "That may help a little" said he. "Take it to a pawnshop and see what you can get on it. Then telegraph for money." "You are very kind," I said. "But I do not know what you mean. Whom shall I telegraph and what shall I say?" He smiled as he told me that the Western Union had money order offices at certain points and told me to wire my father to send me twenty dollars, and explained how the telegraph company thus transmitted money. Breakfastless I hastened to a pawnshop to which he directed me, and got my first and only lesson in this art, and came away with four and a half dollars and my red ticket. Now I could at least spend my quarter for breakfast, and I lost no time in so doing. Thence to the nearest telegraph office where I received shock number two: Millersburg (almost two hundred miles away), was not a money order office. The nearest was Mansfield, over thirty miles from my home, and I knew no one there. I tried Delaware where a boy friend was attending Wesleyan University. He had gone home for a vacation. There was no use to write to my parents who lived out in the country ten miles from Millersburg, and got mail irregularly. I could walk the distance in five or six days and that was as soon as I might be sure of a reply. Once more I sought the station master. He complimented me more than he knew when he said, "Young man you are so damned green that I guess you are honest. Now you go upstairs to that room there that says Division Superintendent and tell the fellow there your story. He may find some way

to help you out." With fear and trembling I did as I was bidden. I told the superintendent how anxious I was to get to school and how every hour lost made it harder for me to catch up with my classes. He had a kindly face but very searching eyes, I thought. Finally he asked me whether I had a trunk. I showed him my check and explained that the trunk contained my "other suit" and a couple dozen books. "Well," said he, "I guess I'll send you home on your baggage." I thought he meant I would have to sit astride my trunk in the baggage car, but I was not discouraged. Anything to get there. He picked up a time-card and asked my destination. I told him "Millersburg." "Too bad" he said, "that's on the C. A. & C. The best I can do is to send you to Columbus and then you'll be only half way and in the same pickle again." He asked a clerk to look up the connections with the C. A. & C. at Columbus, turned to his desk, and in a few minutes handed me an envelope remarking: "My boy, this contains a pass over our line to Columbus and a letter to the conductor of No. 13 asking him to carry you to Millersburg. There the agent will hold your trunk until you pay him the fare from Columbus." I was so grateful I could have kissed him! I thought that this man might have had help himself sometime when he was in trouble, he was so kind and considerate. He looked almost as happy as I felt.

At Columbus I ran into a new difficulty. The C. A. & C. train was a little mixed local and only ran to Mt. Holly, so it was necessary for me to wait there until the conductor put his train to bed, then along

with him to the dingy old boarding house for the night. In the morning he passed my credentials on to the proper train conductor, and in due time I arrived at Millersburg, borrowed ten dollars from a relative, paid the station agent my fare, and thus learned how to get off my baggage even if I had been alarmed at riding on it. I was not long in catching a ride to a point near the old home and was soon relating my somewhat thrilling adventures. A couple of days in which to review the progress on the prairie and then on to school. At this juncture I had to borrow from my uncle five hundred dollars to carry me through the school year and back to Iowa at its close. Money went far in those days. We had plain but wholesome food at the "club," slept two in a bed, and got through at a cost of eight dollars a week. The only money I spent for recreation during the entire year was for the trip to Cleveland to see Lawrence Barrett in Hamlet. I was keen to see a theatre and to know why it was taboo in our family. I came away with the impression that my parents were wrong in decrying the theatre as one of the abodes of the devil. I was thrilled with the performance and determined to read all the Shakesperian plays. It was an eventful year in my development. Although somewhat handicapped by my late entrance it was not long until I was able to measure up creditably in my class work. This, however, was a small part of my interest. I reveled in the keen, searching, scholarly, compelling discourses of Professor Carver. Instead of the customary "chapel" exercises we had daily talks on

scientific, philosophic and literary topics. I recall particularly a series on The Doctrine of the Correlation and Conservation of Forces, and a series on Evolution. Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, all the scientific luminaries of that period, became lode stars in my reading and study. Carver had that unusual faculty of leading one just far enough to insure his interest in one path, then proceeding to point out an equally attractive new one. It was my association with this unusual man, this remarkable teacher, that moulded my tastes and largely determined the direction of my later literary explorations. Even today if I were asked to name the two most interesting books I had recently read I should answer unhesitatingly "The Martyrdom of Man" and "The Rival Philosophies of Jesus and Paul." One of the first books of this class that I bought was Winchell's Evolution. In it I read: "Evolution is the transformation through successive differentiations of the homogeneous into the heterogeneous." Whenever a fundamentalist tries to draw me into a futile discussion I give him Winchell's definition to play with. I dipped into Rousseau, Voltaire, Renan. I devoured a "History of Religions," Savage's "Beliefs about the Bible" and "Beliefs about Man." Emerson began to mean something to me. In the field of poetry I found that it was the philosophic rather than the rhythmic that appealed to me most strongly. In short, I was learning to read. A new world was opening to me. Fortunate is he who in the formative state comes under the kindly guidance of a real teacher. Such was Carver, and although

he was devoid of business sense and failed in his experiment to establish a permanent school, yet he lived in the careers of those whom he so deftly taught to stand alone.

The months wheeled by and July found me once more at the Lavender home on the Iowa prairie. The wheat was ripening and help was scarce. There was work a plenty for me and my horses, and I was anxious to earn some money. My first harvest experience was not soon to be forgotten. It was the hardest day of physical work in my entire life. The self-binder had not been perfected. There was one machine in the neighborhood, the immediate predecessor of the real self-binder. This binder operated automatically, but the bands were of wire. Threshing difficulties and the presence of the wire in the straw doomed it as a practicable implement. It was not long until the twine self-binder succeeded this primitive machine, and harvesting was revolutionized. But this year the old Marsh harvester was still king. I was unacquainted with the brute, and did not know the size of the contract I had made when I agreed that first day to join Ras Hopkins as a full hand back of its steel teeth. The cut grain fell on a revolving web which deposited it on a table at one end of the platform on which the binders stood. Alternately each of the two men would make a band of straw, remove the pile to a side table, bind the bundle and toss it off. The stalks piled so rapidly that it took quick and accurate action to keep the table clear. Every second's delay meant a larger bundle. Ras was a well seasoned giant and I a soft schoolboy.

By midday I was almost exhausted but I was too proud to give up the job, although I told the driver I might not last all day. He took me aside and then confided: "Ras ain't playin' fair. There's a trick in this work and you are binding more than your half. Now you take the first sheaf and be sure it is a little one. If anything goes wrong don't stop to do it over. Keep your mind on the *next sheaf* and be ready for it before it gets too big and he'll have to bind his half." Not only did his system work and thus get me through the day, but I learned a very valuable lesson: I have found all through life that it pays to keep one's mind on the next sheaf. It is one of the secrets of good organization. Again the harvest was quite a disappointment. The yield was greatly reduced and the quality impaired through the continued ravages of the chinch bug. This miserable pest in appearance, odor, and general activity bore a close resemblance to the bedbug. Attacking the grain in the ripening stage, ruin marked its track. Thousands of acres were not worth harvesting. Sometimes in binding the sheaves I found the stench almost sickening. A two years' scourge and then gradual disappearance. The long threshing period that followed the harvest had its novelties for me. Stack yards studded the prairie to its rim. The threshed straw was not saved but dragged out into the open fields and burned. In those early days truly it seemed that "Time has only one flower; its name is now," for from the heart of the soil was forced its best with no thought of the future. Everywhere there seemed to me to be cruel waste, for I was from Ohio.

I began to chafe under the limitations of boarding and decided to build a little one-room house on my land and live alone. My mother sent me some bedding. I purchased the minimum kitchen equipment, bought a cow and some chickens, built a thatched shed for my horses, and by corn husking time I was fairly settled in my new home. Meanwhile I had engaged to stay in Iowa and teach the winter term of the home school. I was well and happy. Between my farm work and the kitchen I had no time to be lonely. Of course the culinary program was not a burdensome one. Although Mr. Post and Mr. Kellogg had not yet begun to function, "graham flour" was a staple, and graham mush and milk constituted the chief part of my bill of fare. I could not afford ham or bacon or canned goods, but there were always available chicken and eggs. Kind neighbors often shared some delicacies with me such as fresh meat or a fruit product. I always had enough to eat, and, what was of the greatest importance, it cost me very little.

The winter fairly flew. My school was interesting. The nearby church furnished all the social diversion that I needed. The long evenings afforded an abundance of time with my books. I was young, strong, and busy. I was becoming acclimated, for I had learned to burn corn without any qualms of conscience. Owing to early frosts much of the corn was inferior in quality, and even the marketable portion brought so little that it was cheaper fuel than coal. The Iowa farmer had not yet learned that live stock

was his great asset, and that the mere raising of grain spelled failure. It had been a bad year, but the worst was yet to come. Yet the new season opened auspiciously. I now had my entire quarter section broken and planted the newly broken 80 to wheat. I had a good growing grove of several hundred maples and an orchard. My land began to look like a farm.

Harvey Campbell, a boy friend from Ohio, even poorer than I, and also a country school teacher, came on my invitation to share my shack and equipment. He did the outside chores and I assumed the cooking and the care of the shack. The new arrangement had one drawback. There was but one bed and Campbell had a habit of sleeping in the form of a capital S, thus occupying the whole bed. I finally fastened a piece of fence board to the head and foot of the bed forcing an equal division of space. This was somewhat inconvenient for the partition had to be removed every Sunday when we made the bed, but it was effective.

About this time I fear I committed a tactical blunder. I had my father send me from Ohio an old buggy which I had called my own. This was the first in our prairie settlement. There were spring seats on the lumber wagons and saddles a plenty for those who needed them, but a buggy was a luxurious innovation, and while I added to my prestige with the prairie maidens this was offset by the envy and jealousy of the swains. There was no escape from the law of compensation. Nevertheless the buggy contributed much to my personal comfort. I was able to

get my mail oftener and could more frequently visit the village eight miles away.

Campbell rented some nearby acres as a start, meantime helping me with my work, of which there was an abundance. It was a favorable season and the crops grew rapidly. Especially promising was the wheat, which had been planted in great abundance on the theory that even by the laws of chance a crop was due after so many failures. In every direction, so far as the eye could reach, wheat met wheat, a waving sea of green. From the moist warm soil the bearded heads in those early July days were fast pumping through the yellowing tubes the milk to be moulded into the spacious kernels. Another fortnight and the hum of the harvest machines would fill the air. It was a glorious prospect. And then the blight! In three days' time the green shimmer gave place to a sickly white. The milky kernels shriveled, withered, baked. Countless thousands of acres were left untouched by the harvesters. In northern Iowa whole farms were abandoned, the occupants moving on to the northwest in search of more favorable conditions. Call it a case of providential interference, call it a rebellion of the soil against undue taxation, call it the result of a climatic freak, it does not matter; it meant that the Iowa farmer was getting a lesson for all time, and that the prairies were soon to swarm with cattle and hogs and the farms to be continually enriched. The robbery of the soil by the continuous succession of the uncertain wheat was about to cease. Thus these bad years proved to be a disguised blessing.

I confess my own enthusiasm was decidedly cooled. I was beginning to tire of pests and blight and uncertain returns for labor, and to wonder if I had not made a mistake in my undertaking. Yet I hated to admit defeat, and fully as much on my father's account as my own. I was about to become of age, and this event was to be celebrated by my attaining the title to the farm, my father having agreed to give me outright a fifth interest and I to pay him twenty dollars an acre for the remainder. I knew that some day this land would be valuable. I decided to stick another year and hope for improved conditions. Once more I taught the home school during the winter. Campbell secured a school in the next district so we continued to board ourselves at the shack. The winter passed pleasantly though uneventfully. We were both mighty glad to have the real money that came at the close of our schools. Corn prices continued shamefully low. Everybody was hard up. The only ones who were fairly prosperous were the few who had stock. It took money to stock a farm. There could be no quick transition by the ordinary poor farmer. I found myself growing more and more discontented. The job looked too big and the compensations out of all proportion to the effort. One day in early August I drove to Montezuma, the county seat, almost twenty-five miles away to pay my taxes. On the way I stopped at the village of Malcom and called on a Mr. Johnson with whom I had become acquainted in political conventions. He was a member of the school board and remarked that they were looking for a principal

and asked me if I knew of a good candidate. He told me they would pay $90 a month for a nine months' term to commence early in September. I thought fast though not realizing that what I was about to say would change the whole current of my life. I finally said: "It is possible that you are looking into the face of your new principal. I can do this job. I am not sure that I want it, nor do I know your associates would take me. On my way back tomorrow I will see you and talk it over." And thus it happened that on the following Thursday night a poor farmer died and a schoolmaster was born.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ENTER THE SCHOOLMASTER

I WAS fortunate in my debut. The village of Malcom was rather distinctive. Some one once said that the best type of citizen is a Yankee who has lived ten years west of the Mississippi. Whether attracted by the neighboring town of Grinnell (named after its distinguished New England founder, the pioneer J. B. Grinnell), the seat of Iowa college, or what, I do not know; but the fact was that in Malcom and in the rich farm area about it there were several high class New Englanders who had sought their fortunes on these fertile prairies in the early days of settlement. The nearby Meigs farm was a haven for me. It was typical of my new environment. This large farm was a veritable garden carved out of the deep-soiled prairie. Widow Meigs, its manager and the head of the family, represented an even then fast disappearing type. She was the mother of seven giants and their much loved sister. One of these sons, Church, was the father of Merrill C. Meigs, Publisher of the Chicago Herald and Examiner; and of J. B. Meigs, also a distinguished publisher.

It was this same Merrill Meigs, then unborn, who in August, 1927, reporting his recent air mail flight from Chicago to San Francisco, writes: " It took one hour and fifty minutes from Chicago to Iowa City. We

will soon be passing over the cemetery at Malcom where my mother and father sleep. I almost feel their presence up here alone. Seventy-five years ago this summer my grandfather Meigs came over land almost directly on the route we are flying. He came in a covered wagon and took weeks for the distance we are covering in a few minutes."

Mrs. Meigs was imposing, intelligent, masterful, versatile, and kind. She was deservedly worshipped by the well-bred brood. The entire household overflowed with hospitality. The picture of this queenly pink-faced gray-haired mother, radiating love and good cheer at every turn, is as clear in memory as if it had been but yesterday that I came into the kindly influence of this splendid group. In such associations as these I was refreshed from the drudgery and solitude that had attended my life in the prairie shack.

I was successful in my school work and was happy during my three years' stay in the village. At the end of my first year my wages were advanced. I decided to test the maxim that two could live as cheaply as one. It was only a little three-room cottage to which I hastened to bring from Ohio my waiting sweetheart, Anna Milligan, but it was full of love and of the exuberance of youth. Several years elapsed before we realized that the deadly devil of disease was lurking in the shadows, awaiting opportunity to pounce upon us and destroy our peace and comfort.

Although my salary was modest I at least did not share the experience of my good friend, A. C. Hart, the superintendent at the neighboring town of Grinnell.

He had served many years satisfactorily without any change in salary. One year as the time of the annual reëlection approached he overcame his native modesty sufficiently to ask one of the trustees if he did not think it would be in order to give him a slight raise. "Let's see," said the frugal member, "How much are you getting?" "One hundred a month for nine months. I think I ought at least to have a ten-dollar raise," responded Hart. "That's all right with me. I'll see what I can do," observed the trustee. In a few days Hart received a written notice of reëlection at a salary of $910, a raise of ten dollars a year instead of ten dollars a month.

I became quite interested in politics. Having been reared in Ohio I was orthodox and I found myself in the presidential campaign a follower of Garfield. The county superintendent of schools, W. R. Akers, was also a resident of Malcom. He was a good speaker and an ardent republican. The county chairman asked Mr. Akers and me to make a series of speeches at villages and township centers. Our first engagement at Sheridan Center was a blank. No one came. The next night we were to speak at Searsboro, a hamlet about fifteen miles distant. On the way Akers asked me how we should divide the program. "Of course," said he, "there are the three lines of talk: tariff, finance and the bloody shirt. Which division do you prefer?" I replied that I knew nothing about the money question and that I was a little doubtful that I could make a very convincing argument for protection, for at heart I knew it was not the best thing for

the Iowa farmer, but that I could handle war questions to my entire satisfaction, and so it was left, I was to speak first but not to get into the realm of tariff and finance.

I had not known that Searsboro had almost equaled my beloved Holmes County, Ohio, in its war record or I might have preferred speaking on the tariff. The local chairman called the meeting to order in an old deserted storeroom, lighted by one huge lamp backed by an immense tin reflector, and introduced me. From the forty or fifty auditors into whose faces the reflector threw its fierce rays I picked out one as my best prospect. Beneath shaggy white eyebrows peered button-like black eyes. Two long yellow streaks down his full white beard marked where the tobacco juice started and ended. But he looked intelligent, and he was. My speech had been carefully committed to memory. I had prepared it with a view to use on memorial days. I was rather proud of it. Gradually I climbed to my first period, ending with an appeal to stand by the glorious standard bearer chosen by the Republican party, to perpetuate the patriotism marked by the living sacrifices at Antietam, Chickamauga, and Gettysburg. "Let us once more clothe ourselves in these blood-stained garments, gather about us the orphans and the widows, and bearing aloft the stars and stripes, with 'cheers for the living and tears for the dead,' fall in behind the great and good Garfield, and march triumphantly toward the glorious goal."

I paused for applause. There was none. Instead my

gray-haired objective arose, said "My God!" and stamped out. I was flabbergasted. I didn't know he was one of the unregenerate secessionists. I floundered a little, then introduced my scholarly colleague as one of the best known authorities on the great questions before them. It was my first and last political speech. Not that I dropped out of politics. Far from it. It was only the speechmaking that I threw into the discard. These were interesting political days in Iowa. It was the time of the railroad regime; the days of the invisible empire of Blythe and Hubbard. Of course Iowa had senators, Gear and Allison, who spoke and voted, but the voices were the voices of Jacob, the hands were the hands of Esau. "Stand pat" was not yet a part of the Republican vocabulary, but "anti-railroad" was. It would not be very long until the hostile Sir Knight Cummins would appear on the scene and open the flood-gates of progressivism against these intrenchments. But first came young Lochinvar out of the west: through all the wide border his steed was the best. It was Dolliver, the brilliant young orator of Fort Dodge, thrilling Iowa as had none before him, who came to the rescue and injected new vigor into an uneasy party. It was on August 21, 1884, at the state convention in Des Moines, that, as temporary chairman, he delivered the speech that at once gave him national prominence. The Des Moines Register overflowed with praise and prophecy. The Republican National Committee lost no time in engaging his services for the presidential campaign. True, Dolliver had cam-

paigned in his home state of West Virginia ever since he was eighteen. He had spoken frequently in the Tenth District where he was defeated for Congress, but it was the Des Moines Convention and the Des Moines Register that disclosed to Iowa that this young man of twenty-six was a remarkable orator and destined to be a great leader. The question as to whether Dolliver's speeches were carefully prepared or were extempore was widely discussed. I determined if the opportunity came I would try to ascertain the truth. In the campaign of 1884 he spoke in Brooklyn, Iowa, and was my guest for dinner. I recalled that he prefaced his convention speech with the statement that it was somewhat incongruous to expect a speech from him, for he found himself, after his recent defeat for Congress, in much the same predicament as one of the headless creatures in Dante's Inferno. He then described the picture in Doré's Illustrated Inferno, based on Canto XXVIII

> "By the hair
> It bore the severed member, lantern wise
> Pendent in hand, which looked at us and said
> 'Woe's me'!"

This figure, holding in his right hand his severed head, was an illustration so exceedingly apt that I was curious to know how Dolliver happened to have it in mind, so I asked him whether it was canned or fresh. He replied, "You have asked me a plain question and I will answer you in kind. One day when I was making a house-to-house canvass in my congressional campaign I stopped at a farmhouse for dinner. The housewife

showed me into the parlor to await the incoming of the men from the field. On the center table lay a copy of The Inferno with the Doré illustrations. Thumbing it through I was attracted by this picture. Maybe, I thought, that is what awaits me. Anyway it is a good illustration of defeat, and I'll just make a note of it, and so, you see, I was loaded." The incident convinced me that the reason Dolliver made such powerful speeches was because he always went loaded. He never trusted to luck.

The reasons why Dolliver changed front on Cummins' succession to Allison's seat as U. S. Senator, and joined Cummins in the battles of progressivism, and made the Iowa republicans like it, is not for me to relate or explain. It is only on the personal side that my interest lies. I am glad to have known them both.

Another most interesting political personage whom I was to enjoy as friend and neighbor a few years later was that grand old man, Horace Boies. There were not many democrats in Iowa those days, but there were enough men in the state to make him governor, and I am too young to have heard of any one who was a better governor. He represented the highest type of Iowa manhood.

My last days in Malcom were marred by disaster.

The seventeenth of June, 1882, is a date not to be effaced from the memory of any who were then living in the fair little village. The day was an uncommon one for even that region. The earth steamed under the fierce rays of a burning sun. The saturated air was like a huge compress from which there was no escape.

One breathed with difficulty. There was not the slightest zephyr to carry away the perspiration that welled from human pores. Fowls stood with raised wings and opened mouths. All animal life seemed half paralyzed in the stifling heat. In the midafternoon the blazing sun seemed to set in the inky sky; for in the upper air there was spread a vast stratum of cloud almost as blue as the sky itself. This cloud roof seemed almost stationary.

With the approach of night, banks of low storm clouds began to appear above the horizon. Incessant lightning; constant, far-reaching, and deep rolling thunders heralded the gathering of a great storm. Yet it seemed slow to advance. It was an hour before it finally broke in all its fury. For several minutes a terrific deluge poured through the blinding sheets of lightning. A moment's calm, and then a deafening roar, as if some huge train thundered past the door. This lasted for only a minute or two while the storm continued unabated. My little toy-house trembled but did not part. Suddenly the door opened and our neighbor, a young mother who lived across the way, entered clad only in her nightdress. In her arms she bore a young babe which was covered with mud and leaves. Her heavy black hair hung in long wet strings to her knees. Her face was pallid. Frightened by the storm she had attempted to flee to our house, and had been caught midstreet at the very moment of the passing of the tornado, and yet as by a miracle escaped unhurt. Not until she could speak did we know what had happened. She told us that the little

village was blown to pieces. We hastened to the relief of less fortunate neighbors. The night was spent in caring for the homeless.

Morning disclosed that the three churches, the school building, and the stores were in ruins. There was not a public room in which to hold funeral services for the ten dead. And yet our disaster was but an echo, for now came word that it was Grinnell, nine miles away, that received the full force of the terrible tornado. Here a path two blocks wide was cut through the heart of the town. The houses were razed as completely as if the track had been dragged by a million ton weight. The college buildings were shaved from the campus. It was a trail of death and destruction. The old high school was turned into a morgue and there lay nearly fifty bodies.

Some notion of the tremendous force of that fierce funnel is evidenced by one illustration: On my farm twenty-five miles away, the morning after the storm there was found the top of a piano and a bundle of canceled notes bearing the stamp of a Grinnell bank that had been sucked into the monster's maw.

My three years as principal of the Malcom schools passed all too quickly, but it was the old, old story of the need of more money, and I accepted a call from the nearby town of Brooklyn, where I remained as superintendent for six years. Brooklyn was only a few miles distant from my farm to the possession of which I had still clung, in the hope that sometime it would prove a paying investment. I was able to give the farm considerable attention week-ends and in vaca-

tion periods. I borrowed money to stock it and under the management of a fairly good tenant I was able to secure some income from my share of the proceeds, but I was entirely content to farm by proxy. If I had not previously taken the cure, I was ready to do so now, for it was during this period that I offered further evidence that I was not cut out for the farm. I had succeeded in preparing for the market one hundred choice hogs. In early July the price was favorable and I contracted for the delivery of this thousand dollar lot at the station on the new branch railway, a mile and a half away. The neighbors were all busy in the hayfields and I could get no wagons in which to haul the swine. It meant a dozen trips for our one team. I decided to drive the herd to the station. In Ohio we always drove the hogs to market, a distance of four or five miles; but I had overlooked that these tree-climbing hogs of Ohio whose relatives are the "razor backs" of the south, and the small boned, small lunged soft Berkshires of Iowa, with a year's growth crowded into a few months of skillful feeding, were two distinct propositions. Omitting the details I will simply state, that crazed with the heat the unruly lot broke, ran into the tall grass of the nearby slough, and all but a dozen died. Then under the deadly rays of the July sun we had to dig trenches and cover their swiftly decaying carcasses. Thus I learned about farming from them.

Yet I did not surrender. I never had much ready money, but there never has been a day in my life when I did not have abundant credit. B. M. Talbot,

of the local bank never failed me. I borrowed more money and tried another angle. This time it was cattle. For a little while the outlook was promising. It was a proud day in my life when finally I was able to fill a car with fat steers and go with them one Friday night to the Chicago Stock Yards to the market. My guide was a local stock buyer, Moses McAra, a kind-hearted and intelligent man who had a few loads ready for shipment. We rode in the caboose, napping during the all-night ride as best we could. At the rather infrequent stops we would look into our cars and "punch" into standing position any laggards. I was bewildered at the activities of the yards. In a couple of hours McAra had sold my steers at a good price, and I joyously joined him in the trip down town with my check safely tucked away — the largest one I had ever seen. Up to this time I had never owned a gold watch, and I decided on this purchase as my one extravagance. Here again the thrifty McAra came to the rescue. "Let me get you a watch. Don't go to a jeweler's. Buy it at a pawnshop for a third of the price." And this he did. It must have been a good one, for although forty years old it keeps good time yet. We did not linger long in the city, for I had to be at my post in the schoolhouse early Monday morning.

And so for a few years I tried to run the farm as a side line, but I acquired more experience than profit, and it was more out of respect for my father's hopes than my own interest that I hung on.

On the other hand I found teaching a delight, and

I was constantly making new and interesting acquaintanceships. Some of them developed into rare friendships. Thus, one summer morning in the eighties I was waiting in the office of the county superintendent at Burlington to get his directions for work in his county institute in which I was to be an instructor. There was waiting also another young man whose fine appearance and quiet demeanor at once attracted me. His name was J. B. Hungerford. He had been formerly in newspaper work in Burlington. He had recently returned from Salt Lake City where he had failed in operating a daily. He was out of a job and "broke." I saw at once that he was a man of charm and ability. The superintendency at Montezuma, only a few miles from Brooklyn, was open. I gave him letters of introduction. In a few days he was elected, and we became neighbors. I think I was not the only attraction at Brooklyn (she was beautiful), but at any rate, for four years he was often at my house, and we became as David and Jonathan, an attachment that has remained intact through all the years. J. B. Hungerford of the Carroll Herald is one of the best known men in western Iowa, and his name is a synonym for integrity. The warp and woof of contentment is made up of such contacts, and it is in early manhood that they count most. After forty one makes acquaintances but few friends.

It was at Brooklyn that I had my introduction to the genus schoolbook man. These were the years of that fierce fighting which ultimately resulted in the formation of the American Book Company, a com-

bination of most of the leading schoolbook publishing houses of the period. The state swarmed with agents. The first one I saw was V. L. Wilson. He was a little fellow with a high-pitched voice. He wore a "Prince Albert" and a "plug hat." Also a cane, and a boutonnière. Ely, who preached on the side, gave me a Lippincott's Pronouncing Gazetteer. The tall, dignified, genteel, courteous J. N. Hunt "had an uncle that he came to visit," not at all was he looking to see what crows were in the school cornfield. And then there was Clancy, "Major Clancy" of A. S. Barnes and Company. At the time of his death, a year ago, he was known by school people from coast to coast as the dean of the book men. The story of my introduction to Clancy will be appreciated by all who knew him. Clancy did not have an "uncle" but he really did have a foster brother in Brooklyn, S. W. Heath, the county superintendent. Clancy dropped off to see him one week-end in midsummer. At this time we were contributing our mite to the prohibition crusade by having union temperance meetings every Sunday night, and incidentally giving our overworked preachers a rest. It devolved upon me to prepare the program for this particular Sunday night, for the meeting was to be in the Presbyterian Church where I was superintendent of the Sunday School. I learned that there was a distinguished visitor in town and that Mr. Heath said he was a fine speaker. I lost no time in calling and inviting Clancy to speak on the evils of intemperance. I afterwards learned that the delightful major was completely at

home with his subject, and he certainly made a most stirring speech, parts of which many times in later years he dramatically repeated to me for the entertainment of friends. In a yellow linen suit and high hat, silky golden "burnsides" glistening in the sunlight, the empty sleeve dangling at his side, elastic, erect, the major was a decidedly picturesque figure.

A little later I met Jonathan Piper, the daddy of all the tribe. He was the idol of the oldtime schoolmaster, and the last of his kind, for he belonged to the pioneers.

It was evident that whatever of advancement was in store for me was in the line of school work. So I assiduously cultivated the acquaintance of the educational leaders, studied them, and tried to make myself worthy of their friendship and support. In 1888 a vacancy occurred in the superintendency of the Cedar Falls schools, and I resolved to try to get the position. I had neither degree nor pedigree, but I did have the enthusiastic backing of Henry Sabin, the foremost educator in the state, and the support of a few good advisers. I think I owed my election chiefly to the fact that the iconoclastic president of the board, the Honorable H. C. Hemenway, a keen lawyer and a man of the highest ideals, decided after an extremely rigid cross-examination that he recognized in me a kindred spirit, and decided that I would do. At any rate I was chosen, and gave the best twelve years of my life to that community. Cedar Falls was looked upon as one of the best positions in the state. It enjoyed the prestige of being the home of the State

Normal School, of which the rapidly growing Seerley had been elected president two years earlier. Yet it was Main Street. There is scarcely a character in "Main Street" that did not have a replica in Cedar Falls. Main Streets always will have blunderbusses, effigy hangers, myopic boobs. One must learn not to let them disturb his soul. Ignorance is to be pitied, and he who aspires to contentment must not take weaklings too seriously.

The Main Street that I met was a very likable place. It had an unusual proportion of people of marked culture and refinement who stood loyally for good schools, and on this element I could always rely. The time had arrived for radical changes, and this progressive faction welcomed a leadership that insisted on better buildings, better equipment, and better teachers. Jointly we saw to it that no disturbers ever came into board membership. Funds were cheerfully provided, and soon the schools had acquired the reputation of being among the best in the state. My twelve years' service as superintendent was not marred by a single disturbance. It was a period rich in those friendships incident to small town life, and full of good things for one who gets enjoyment out of close contact with the young. Life was far from dull those days. I never experienced ennui. I confess that at times I found myself in somewhat the same predicament as that of old man Esselburn, a very religious and industrious neighbor near the old Ohio home. I recall that once when my father asked him how he was getting along he responded: "Purty goot, Laylander,

all except Sundays. Dey iss fery long. Sometimes I yoost get so full of hell tevilment I've got to go and clean the shtables oud." Once this spirit hit me in connection with a sacred time-honored institution of the town, "The Parlor Reading Circle." It ran quite true to type. I am not at all sure that Sinclair Lewis did not visit it before "Babbit." It should be noted that the following incident occurred almost thirty-five years ago. At one meeting during the "Current Events" section of the program the members were expected to answer the question "What is your favorite magazine and why?" The following quotations indicate the character of my reply:

"My favorite magazine is The Ladies Home Journal. First: it meets the reader on his own social and spiritual level. Second: because of the personality of the dear old lady who is its editress. I regard Mrs. Bok as one of the safest of living writers. Third: because it is so practical. Thus, you may find How a Play is Written, When Kisses are Real and Unreal, What is the Matter with the Public Schools, When to Take Railroad Trains, and hundreds of pages of similar information.

"I appreciate Ruth Ashmore's Sidetalks with Girls. These talks can scarcely fail to convert any wishy-washy girl into a noble woman. Many almost at death's door socially have taken Ruth's elixir and have been pulled through.

"Mrs. Bok is consistent. She believes in the doctrine of correlation. Without turning a leaf you may read an article on Girls Should Keep Young followed

by a description of Bailey's Heel Cushions and The Perfect Beautifier. What Children May Eat is correlated with the advertisement for Eskay's Baby Food; Mother's Mistakes and Father's Failures are interspersed with illustrations of Infanto Shirts, Music Boxes and Cranks, and Cures for Earache.

"This magazine is my choice because I like to be with the majority. It probably has a hundred readers to one of The Bookman or The Atlantic. If one talks, dresses, reads, thinks just as other people do life is one long lovely slide. I realize that if we could all be like Mrs. Bok we would be very happy and popular."

But alas, my attempt at humor fell flat. There were three or four responsive grins but for the most part only glum silence. In the cloakroom the more or less young woman who presided at the meeting was overheard to remark, "Isn't it a shame that we have such an ignoramus at the head of our schools? He doesn't even know that Bok is a man!"

Another sally into the field of the jocular afforded amusement for several months. Prompted by the then popular column in the Chicago Herald in which appeared the "Amber" letters I suggested to my friend W. H. Hurd, the editor of The Cedar Falls Gazette, that we run weekly an anonymous column of "Town Talk" over the name of "Annabel," in which there would be discussed as if purely from a woman's point of view follies and foibles in general and matters of current local interest. Care was taken that my identity should not be disclosed. I even replied to some of Annabel's letters taking decided issue with her. The

character of these observations may be inferred by the following quotations:

"Burns was wrong. People do not want the power to see themselves as others see them. On the contrary, they bend every energy to make other people see them as they see themselves. People do not like to have their follies, and faults, and weaknesses hung up to public gaze, even by an obscure woman in a weekly newspaper! The critics of Annabel have given me a new insight into human nature. Miss Prim holds up her hands in holy horror as she comments upon my diction. Father Fullsome objects to the air of slushiness that seems to pervade the papers. Mrs Upright wishes that there might be more unity in the articles and less attention to insignificant details."

"Little things constitute nine-tenths of life, however, and so long as small talk constitutes the bulk of what I hear, as a faithful reporter I must confide my discussions to its content. Waste no sympathy on me. But when you see your own words reflected in these columns, and your own image, bearing more wrinkles and fewer dimples then you expected to find, resolve to reform your habit of thanking the Lord that you are not as other men, and begin a little home missionary work."

"There is one quality in which men are unquestionably superior to women: they are not jealous of each other as women are. It hurts no man's feelings for a woman in his presence to speak of another man's fine appearance or extraordinary talent, but for a man to compliment thus another woman in the presence of

number one is to dig himself a grave. I should much dislike to be an extraordinary woman; for the penalty of greatness that would come in the looks and speech of other women would be more than any sensitive soul could bear."

I succeeded for several months in diverting suspicion of being the author of the column, and Mr. Hurd and I shared in the fun. A rather uncommon use of a word was my undoing. In one of my contributions I had referred to a certain type of person as "sappy." It happened that in private conversation with a certain woman I used the same expression. She pounced upon it at once and gleefully announced, "I have discovered Annabel," and Annabel died very suddenly.

Probably the fun I had in this episode prompted me a little later to a more daring step. It was the year of the famous Bryan-McKinley campaign. Iowa, then democratic under the strong leadership of Horace Boies, was a free silver battlefield. The Bryanites inspired with hope of success had established at Cedar Falls a free silver organ. The young man who was at the head of this temporary enterprise had little ability as a writer although he seemed to be well enough financed. He came to me and offered to pay me well if I would contribute for his editorial page a column or two a week of free silver propaganda. Much as I needed the money I explained to him the plan was not feasible for two reasons: First, I knew little about financial questions, and what study and reading I had done led me to incline toward the single standard;

and second, that I could not afford in my position to antagonize the community which was intensely republican, and that heretofore had tolerated me as a democrat because to my neighbors the fact that I persisted in being a democrat was rather more amusing than dangerous. He importuned me, assuring me that he didn't care what I believed; that what he wanted was "copy," and that he thought I could write on one side as well as the other. He assured me that he would keep our relations a profound secret and claim the articles to be his own. The spirit of mischief prevailed. We arranged a secret meeting place for exchange of copy and proofs. I kept entirely away from his office, and during the entire campaign I filled my weekly space and frequently much more. As I delved into the study of the question I found the work fascinating and the subject not wholly one-sided. Again I adopted the ruse of replying to my own articles. Better yet, I succeeded in getting Mr. Parish, professor of political economy at the Normal School, to reply to the editorials. We would discuss these together, so I always knew what Parish was going to say, and managed to keep a jump ahead of him. I enjoyed the experience immensely and came through scarless and unsuspected. Meanwhile the owner of the paper had acquired some prestige as a writer.

Politics came near being my undoing after all. I was urged by friends to run for the state superintendency of schools. I had little hope of success, for I had a geographical handicap in that I was from the same county as Governor Boies, who was a candidate for

reëlection, but I thought the publicity would do me no harm, so my name went before the convention. Late in the afternoon of a sweltering day the tired delegates in convention at Ottumwa reached the final order of business, nominations for state superintendent. My good friend, D. W. Norris, of Marshalltown, placed me in nomination, but cries of "Name him!" drowned his eulogy. Next a steamy delegate arose in his place and announced, "I shall make no speech, I will spell the name of the man who should be chosen for this office, and every German and every man who knows a German should vote for him: "K-n-o-e-p-f-l-e-r, of Lansing." The roll was called and Mr. Knoepfler beat me by eight votes. He was easily elected and served the state well. It was fortunate for me that I lost, for success would have deflected me from the course that awaited me, one that was to be much more to my liking and my adaptability.

I arrived on the scene at an interesting time in the educational development of Iowa. The type of schoolmaster that then prevailed has become extinct. Possibly there were not giants in those days, but it cannot be denied that the men in the seventies were men of unusual mental virility. Had they been born fifty years later it is probable that few of them would be found in the roster of schoolmasters; they would have been drawn into and absorbed by the great industrial movements of our day. A few of these figures stand out prominently in my memory. There was the sinewy Scotchman of Burlington, Robert G. Saunderson, a man of remarkable mentality and educational

vision, and capable of inspiring every one with whom he came in contact, a big man measured by any standard. There was John S. Shoup, the grizzly philosopher of Danbury, silent and powerful, the last of his kind in educational Iowa.

At Decorah, first as superintendent of schools, and later as the founder of the first school of its kind in the state, The Decorah Institute, John Breckenridge guided the destinies of hundreds of youths. There are many in high places in life who owe their success to association with this quite remarkable man. I have known few teachers who could so skillfully grow green youths into confident men as did this old giant assisted by his most estimable wife.

A few of the old school such as the inimitable Thomas Irish of Dubuque carried over into this new order, but for the most part they gave way to the renascence of the next decade.

A connecting link was Henry Sabin of Clinton, for eight years state superintendent of schools. In appearance, and in thought habits he harked back to the days of the old philosophers, and yet he was intensely progressive and was recognized throughout the section as one of the foremost educators of the times. I received my first impression of Sabin's keen mentality at the State Teachers' Association at Cedar Falls in 1882. The previous year L. D. Lewelling, who was head of the Iowa State Reform School for Girls, and later governor of Kansas, gave a somewhat startling address on "The Psychology of Crime." This had been discussed by Sabin, Saunderson, and others at

the time. At the following meeting and undoubtedly growing out of this discussion, Mr. Sabin gave an address on "The Children of Crime." Mr. Lewelling replied sharply and forcefully and charged Sabin with a change of heart. I recall how Sabin's black eyes snapped, and how his penetrating high-keyed voice thrilled me as he feelingly responded: "Mr. President, I am not able just now physically and perhaps mentally to answer the gentleman. He has studied the subject for years where I have studied it for months. On one point, however, I have this to say. I did not say that I would give the criminal *only* one chance to reform. I said I would give him one chance at *least* to reform. I would never shut the door of hope upon him. To deny hope and mercy is the prerogative of God alone. I have not receded from any position I took at Oskaloosa last year. I hold to the same view I held then, and if any one has been converted — *I am not the one.*"

I always loved a good fighter, and Sabin won my heart in that retort. These state meetings up to this time had been dignified and devoid of politics, but in 1883 something happened. Leigh Hunt, the brilliant, beardless blond who was boy superintendent of Mount Pleasant, flashed into attention, and contested the election to the presidency of the association with the burly Seerley, who was the popular superintendent at Oskaloosa. Hunt had his eye on the presidency of the State College at Ames and sought election to the presidency of the State Teachers' Association as a preliminary step. The election was a one-

The Old-fashioned Schoolmaster

John Breckenridge

sided contest, Seerley winning, more than six to one. Hunt was not dismayed. He proceeded to organize for the following year, when he succeeded in defeating the venerable Dr. King by four votes. Having demonstrated that he could win he declined acceptance, and Dr. King was duly elected by acclamation. Hunt later gained his election to the presidency of the State College at Ames, but remained only a little more than a year.

The feature of the meeting of 1885 was a joint attack on King Nicotine by Sabin and Seerley. Reform was rampant. Smoking was the unpardonable sin. I had not yet become a confirmed smoker, but I was a confirmed doubter. While I was living alone in the shack on the prairie I was very frequently visited by a young minister who was a summer "supply" at the nearby church. Seldom had I seen a man with so much smoke capacity as my reverend friend. He always seemed more entertaining and companionable when wreathed in smoke. I decided to enlist. Whether because I couldn't afford it, or whether I was deterred by the deadly pictures of Sabin and Seerley, I smoked only occasionally until I was nearly forty, and today I very infrequently smoke more than eight or ten cigars daily.

This illustrates my observation that one of the compensations of age is the realization that many things taught in youth are either untrue or nonessential. These were the days when through the crusade of the W. C. T. U. the school textbooks were filled with all sorts of extravagances in the discussion of narcotics

and stimulants. Many of the illustrations in these books were fearfully and wonderfully made. The little girl expressed the situation quite forcibly when she said as she viewed a gorgeous sunset, "It looks like the picture of a drunkard's stomach." Today only fanatics claim that smoking is bad for everybody. The highest authorities have demonstrated that under certain conditions alcohol is a valuable food and has a very definite therapeutic place. Dr. Raymond Pearl of Johns Hopkins University has demonstrated that the moderate user of the milder alcoholic beverages has a better chance to live long than either the total abstainer or the drunkard. If an Iowa schoolmaster had uttered even in prophecy such notions at this meeting, now more than forty years ago, Sabin and Seerley would have turned him over to the Insane Commissioner instanter.

In this period that centers around 1890 there were in Iowa three outstanding educational figures: President MacLean, of the Iowa State University; President Beardshear of the State College at Ames; and President Seerley of the State Teachers' College at Cedar Falls. Each was big in his own way, but they had few points in common. At the forty-seventh session of the State Association there was at the Sunday meeting a rather unusual occurrence which afforded an excellent opportunity for comparing the three leaders. From the same platform and successively Mr. Seerley spoke on "The Real End of Sunday School Work." Mr. Beardshear spoke on "Personality in the Pedagogy of the Sunday School" and Mr. Mac

Lean on "The Marriage of the Sunday and Secular Schools." It was as if each had unwittingly thrown his own picture on the screen, so clearly did these addresses on similar topics disclose the comparative modes of thought, expression and feeling of each.

MacLean possessed a fine personality. Suave, genial, polished, cultured, this smiling, well groomed, prematurely gray gentleman was attractive in any group. He always sounded as he looked. His words were chosen with the utmost care. He saw to it that there were no flaws in his logic. He wanted all his mental products to be appealing and he rather expected you to remove your hat in their presence. He provoked admiration, and he knew that he could do it. He was to me a very attractive man. He was the respected president of the State University for a dozen years.

Beardshear, brilliant, big of body and of brain, approached genius. Sometimes he was silent, thoughtful, grave, sometimes he fairly bubbled over with genial humor. He had a wonderful gift of speech and often his poetic flights seemed almost inspired. A few there were who knew his philosophy of life, who had measured his range of vision, and had taken the soundings of his soul. These knew him to be truly great. He was scholar, poet, philosopher, friend. I enjoyed his close companionship, and his early death was to me a great personal loss.

The third of this forceful group was Seerley who in 1886 had been called from Oskaloosa to the presidency of the State Normal School, now the State Teachers' College at Cedar Falls, Iowa. As I was superintendent

of the public schools there for a dozen years I had opportunity to study him at close range in the days of his development of this great school, now the largest of its kind in this country. Every time a new normal school was projected Seerley killed it off by annexing the proposed head, thus slowly and surely carrying out his plans for one great central school for teachers. His blunt honesty won favor with the legislators and he easily secured large appropriations while the other state educational institutions with all sorts of log rolling and political pressure were given grudgingly the absolute necessities. He lacked the scholarly polish of MacLean, the personal charm of Beardshear, but he was by far the best producer of the three. I can draw no more accurate picture of Seerley than these lines which I wrote for the Seerley number of the New England Journal of Education in 1925.

THE BUILDER

Who made you, Homer Seerley?
I will tell you who made you.
You are a son of the Prairie.
Your roots penetrate the deep black soil.
Your branches have weathered the blistering blasts of the Southwest plains and the flying, frozen furies from Medicine Hat.
You are the sturdy oak of the forest, yielding not one jot to the graceful elm, or the stately pine, or the thick-leaved maple.
You are bulky, solid, substantial.
The timbers that come from your log are enduring.
You occupy your own place and none can encroach or should encroach upon you.

What did the Prairie give you, Homer Seerley?
It gave you more than you could extract from books and schools and churches.
You caught the scent of the first-turned turf, and the glint of the glaring share of the breaking-plow still gleams in your eyes.
Your bare feet were bathed in the new-made stream that followed the black track of the great plow as twelve yokes of oxen, belly-deep in mire, dragged it the length of the slough.
With chapped hands, day by day, you, the husker, piled high on the wagon the ears of yellow corn.
You were not deterred by the drifting snows of winter nor the torrid nights of summer.
You thrived under nature's extremes;
You were building for the future.
Toil, with grimy hands and sweaty garments, trudged with you through many a thorny path.

Nor did you realize the richness and variety of your early life.
You were awakened at early dawn by the noisy wooings of the prairie grouse.
You inhaled the exquisite aroma of the wild cherry, the plum and the hawthorn in the thickets.
You saw miles of flowery carpets scattered over the billowy green.
Yow saw the wolf on the crest of the hill, silhouetted against the dying sky.
You followed with wondering eyes the endless stretch of white covered wagons wheeling into the West.
Your soul was being filled with experiences impossible now to your children's children and all children for all time.

Lucky, too, were you in your early education.
Lucky that you were not forced to suck insipid pap from a nursing bottle capped with faddist nipples,
That later your gruel was not soft pedagese,
That the constant song of your childhood was Do, do, do,
That you antedated the days of automobiles and hip-pocket gin as college accessories,

That you stood no danger of losing caste because there was Oskaloosa mud on your cowhide boots,
That your youthful contact was with homely, honest men, untainted sons of the unpainted mothers of the Prairie.

And was it not also lucky for Iowa, Homer Seerley?
Lucky that you happened along when you did?
Just as the pioneer buds were bursting into full material bloom,
That you walked in the shadows of Iowa giants and had their children for comrades?
That every contact was such as to make you equal to your great undertaking?
I rejoice with you, Homer Seerley.
Rejoice over the great monument you have erected,
A monument to sagacity, virility, and vision
Wrought of rough granite and laid in the everlasting mortar of love.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE OTHER SIDE OF MAIN STREET

THE small town has its compensations. In the city one has acquaintances, in the country friends. Here the really worth while fraternize. Conditions breed communion. During my dozen years in Cedar Falls I formed some fine friendships of which the polished, genial W. A. Bryant, the big-hearted, nature loving John Philpot, and the anomalous Dr. Newman were types. Main Street was far from a one-way street.

I was enthusiastically supported in every step towards the betterment of the schools. The controlling element was unusually liberal minded and I was exempt from the petty annoyances that so often beset a superintendent. Ordinarily the life of a superintendent is not an enviable one. My present work as an educational publisher gives me acquaintance with hundreds of supervisors in schools of all grades and sizes and I know far too few who are even reasonably certain of their tenure. They are all more or less hampered by political conditions, all subject to factional disturbances, all at the mercy of the disgruntled; and this regardless of the merits or demerits of any specific case. Doubtless there is abundant ground for criticism of the public schools. I am not at all certain that in the diversified modern curricula there is not too much attention devoted to extending the field of

study and too little to finding better ways of learning how to study essentials. Whatever the situation the superintendent is the chief target.

I was fortunate therefore in my environment. I was permitted to vote, play, and pray as I pleased. Only once did I sight the shoals. The town was in the "throws" of a revival conducted by a professional of the Billy Sunday type. It had only half hearted support from the pastor of the church with which I was affiliated. I refrained from attendance at the meetings. I became a marked man, and an emotional sister offered my name for public prayer. A full harvest of sinners was being reaped, but I had no desire to feel the sickle. My friend Bryant marveling at the psychology of the situation, importuned me to join him just once in a close-up of the performance. I finally yielded. We agreed that we would go to the circus but would not stay for the concert. That is, we would listen to the sermon, then quietly withdraw before the life boats were launched. When we attempted to leave we found to our surprise the entrance door was locked and guarded by a worker who refused to pass us out. The meeting was being held in the "Opera House," a big barn of a building used chiefly as a skating rink, for these were the days of the new roller skates. Under a high stage was the "boiler room" which opened into the rear alley. "Never mind" I said to Bryant, "we can go out the rear way; but tomorrow I will invoke the state law. It is criminal thus to endanger the lives of these misguided boobs." If the brethren and sisters thought Bryant was leading

me to the mourners' bench they were disappointed. Through a side door beneath the stage, and so to the rear door we proceeded, only to find that it also was locked. I picked up an axe, broke down the door, and escaped conversion. Although the next day I telephoned my good friend, J. G. Packard, the owner of the building, and told him to send me the bill for repairs, he refused to do so, assuring me that he felt it an honor to join with me in this rebuke. They ceased to pray for me, and apparently consigned me to the devil, for nothing came of the incident.

Once I learned to my sorrow how one must guard his speech in a small town. One evening at a card table I remarked to my partner who was somewhat of a joker: "Isn't it too bad that Mrs. S. goes barefooted for hours at a time in her home?" expecting to explain that it was when she was asleep. Some interruption prevented the finale and I forgot that I had asked the question. But it had stuck in the lady's mind and it was promptly peddled to the gossips. It was weeks before I accidentally discovered that Mrs. S. and her husband were cutting me because of my "having told a lie about her going barefooted." I hastened to make full explanation and apology, and I learned about Main Street from this.

I think I was quite happy in those days. I had no great responsibilities, no disturbing ambitions. I had good friends at home and near at hand. There was Frank Sessions, the fine able superintendent at Waterloo; Sam Sheakley of Waverly, the rapidly rising young school man, soon to be superintendent

at Des Moines; and in the next zone the dear old father Merrill of Cedar Rapids; the dependable Frank L. Smart, of Davenport; and that wary old diplomat Oldt, of Dubuque; also a younger brood: Henry Adams, now one of the ablest and most respected counselors at law in Iowa; Freeman Bloodgood, later of the State Board of Control in California; and John E. Stout, now the dignified professor of education at Northwestern University.

I recall that once the mentally polypusic editor of the Midland Schools (who later practiced divinity for a livelihood) denounced this coterie as political ringworms and inimical to the educational interests of the state. The charge afforded much amusement for the entire group and cemented their attachments. These fine contacts were part of the web and woof of my life, and factors in making me that rather unusual product, a contented man.

The chief worry I had in those days was to make both ends meet. During my three months of unemployment I taught in the county teachers' institutes then current. I specialized in geography, and here once more fate took a turn in dealing the cards. Ginn and Company had just published the Frye Geography, a radical departure from all textbooks in this subject. The Company was represented in Iowa by two men: E. D. Burbank for the high schools and colleges, and Edwin Bellows for the elementary schools. Bellows was one of the most seductive men I ever met. Young, suave, magnetic, he made friends at sight. I was in the majority. Whether it was of his

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own initiative or whether suggested by the designing Burbank, I do not know; but he found the vulnerable spot in my armor, and once more was the current of my life to be turned into new channels. Bellows informed me that as I was "one of the most noted teachers of geography in the state," that the company desired me to write a state edition — a supplement for the new geography. I protested that I was not a writer, but he retorted: "Look at what you have to beat; you can do it blindfolded and with your arms tied." He offered me liberal compensation. I needed the money. I proceeded to try to earn it. The sequel belongs to a later chapter. I am now convinced that young Bellows hoped that this contact would lead me into a connection with the company.

A source of necessary revenue for me at this time was work in the county teachers' institutes. Here the county superintendent assembled the teachers of the county from four to six weeks during the summer to receive instruction in methods of teaching. It was customary to engage one or two specialists from the outside and to employ leading local talent to fill the quota. It was my good fortune to be in sufficient demand to be kept busy during what would have been otherwise three months of unemployment each year.

In one of these institute engagements a rather amusing incident occurred. It was at Vinton in Benton county. One of the local instructors employed by superintendent Arthur White was a young German named Schroeder, the principal of one of the village schools. He was supposed to teach physiology.

Never had I met a young man so cocksure of himself. He was the personification of conceit. He had only criticisms of all the physical culture work then being introduced into the public schools. He glorified his beloved turnverein and would brook nothing else. We happened to eat at the same table, and after listening to his incessant criticism for many days I determined to humble him. I must have been born under some disorderly star, for all my life the spirit of mischief has been almost uncontrollable. So one day I directed the conversation in such a way as to get him to challenge me for a foot-race. I told him that I had no doubt that with all his "turnvereining" he could beat me, a big, untrained schoolmaster, in a short race, but that I thought that on a mile race the story would be different. Distance made no difference to him, so it was arranged that all the "faculty" should have a picnic supper in a grove on the nearby river to witness the race. In the meantime I took White into my confidence and asked him to explain to the others my scheme to humble Schroeder, and to be aids and abettors in the fiasco. So the course was laid off, forty rods between two trees. It was thus to be covered four times, each time the runner passing around the trees at each end of the course. Stripped for the contest we started. I knew the confident Schroeder would never look back, and so each time after he passed around the post and met me I dropped in behind him without making the turn. The result was that I merely ran back and forth along the middle of the course, or about a quarter of a mile,

and hence was fresh at the finish and readily passed him and won the race. Not only was he utterly cast down, but the result came nearly being serious, for the evening was intensely hot, and the young athlete was little short of a sunstroke. It was a year before he knew he had been the victim of a disciplinary joke. The successful Doctor Schroeder of today recounts with great glee the part we played in his early education.

It was in this same period that I was prompted to perpetrate another practical joke that caused great merriment in Iowa educational circles. These were the earlier days of the National Education Association, and its promoters were making strenuous efforts to secure large attendance from the various states. In this particular year the meeting was to be at Asbury Park, New Jersey. The Iowa State Association had pledged five hundred delegates. The railroads were vying with each other for carrying the crowd. Superintendent Merrill, of Cedar Rapids, and I were appointed a committee of management. Among our duties we were to select headquarters for the Iowa delegation, make proper housing arrangements and a suitable program of entertainment. This involved an advance trip at the expense of the state association. At this juncture came forward James A. Edwards, the somewhat peculiar editor of the Iowa Normal Monthly, which carried the advertisement of one of the railroads. Jim, as he was familiarly known, asked to accompany us on this junketing trip, stating that he could secure passes for all of us over his favorite

road, and thus save the state association our travel expense. It was so arranged. Jim had a reputation of never being overanxious to part with his money if any one else was in sight to pay joint bills, so I suggested the first day out that each of us should pay for one of the three meals. Jim drew breakfast, Merrill the luncheon, and I the dinner, each to make the best bargain he could commensurate with our needs.

We had breakfast at a railway eating house. Jim rather gleefully announced that he had settled for the fifty cent breakfast at half price. He explained, "I showed them the letter of the general passenger agent stating our business, and demanded employee rates." At luncheon Mr. Merrill successfully followed the same plan. But when it came to dinner we discovered that on the connecting road a dining car was to be attached. Not only was I in for full rates, but Jim gleefully announced that he would see to it that I was taxed a good round sum. A little before dinner time I slipped into the dining car and sought an interview with the steward. I wished to engage a table for three and to talk to the waiter who would serve us, as the situation was peculiar and I wished to avoid any scene at the dinner. I explained that two of us were taking an insane patient to the hospital; that the patient was a physician who had gone insane on the subject of diets and that he was liable to order everything on the card, whereas I allowed him only tea and toast. I told the waiter to take his full order, but to bring only the tea and toast, and when the insane man remonstrated just to point to spots on the table cloth and say,

"There's your steak; there are your potatoes," and so forth, and the patient would subside. I promised the waiter a fat fee if he would make no mistakes. He made none. He followed the program exactly as I had laid it out. Jim fairly frothed as the waiter insisted that Jim's long order was on the table. He charged the waiter with being crazy. "No, sah," responded the Ethiopian, "I'se all right, *I* is," and disappeared. After about ten minutes delay I explained to Jim what I had done, and that all his protesting would be unavailing and only prove my case, but now that he had been sufficiently disciplined I would compromise by ordering for him a reasonable dinner and call the account square.

About this time events were impending that were to be tremendous factors in my development. Spurred by the necessity of earning more money than my meager salary provided I started an "Educational Lecture Bureau." On the horizon had lately appeared a drawing card — William Hawley Smith, of Peoria, Illinois. In the Illinois School Journal, published by that real educator, George P. Brown, appeared a serial entitled "The Evolution of Dodd," which at once brought the author into national prominence as an educational iconoclast. Later Rand, McNally and Company gave it in book form an enormous distribution. I think there is no question that this book and the subsequent activities of William Hawley Smith did more to liberalize the course of study in the elementary schools than any other agency of the period. I made a contract to "sell" Smith to local lecture

associations in Iowa, and thus came into close contact with one of the most interesting men I have ever met. Of all my friends he brought into my life the most of joy and growth. He had a lecture entitled "Born Short" which ran amuck through all the current educational practice, for this was before the day of electives, when all the pupils came through the rolling mill, or they didn't. There was no alternative. I "managed" him for three years, years of merry war, for the school people went to hear him, not so much to believe as to attack. But Smith was invincible. One factor in his earnestness was that he had in his own family a defective, and hence Smith's views were not those of the theorist, but of the parent who knew that a true educational program should allow for natural bents and deficiencies. In another way my contact with William Hawley Smith was to be invaluable; for he it was who introduced me to Walt Whitman, and thus most profoundly affected my conception of life. For hours at a time during these three delightful years we would read together and discuss Whitman, he as teacher, I as student. I have never known anyone who could approach Smith as a reader and interpreter of literature. Thus Smith opened for me a closed door. I began to see the light. I found myself not only in possession of a sustaining philosophy, but of the firm conviction that Whitman was the outstanding peak in American literature.

There was a second man, contact with whom in this period I found most exhilarating — Silas Y. Gillan, educator and editor, of Milwaukee. It was in

the fall of 1899 that Oldt, of Dubuque, wrote me: "I have a treat for you in the program of the Northwestern Iowa Association: Gillan, of Milwaukee. *You* will like him." It was not until years after that I learned that the cautious Oldt, and his associate Thomas Irish had exacted from Gillan for censorship a brief of his proposed speech. Gillan sent a diluted digest, but when it came to delivery he gave the real thing, a vitriolic attack on fads in education. Gillan was a master of sarcasm and wit, and I enjoyed this hair-raising performance immensely. Here was a man after my own heart. The recognition was mutual, and we became fast friends. Shortly after the Dubuque meeting he established an Iowa edition of The Western Teacher and I became the editor. Thus we were thrown into intimate association for a long time. Gillan possessed the most logical mind of any man I ever met. He was a keen analyst, gifted in expression, relentless in argument, and withal a most remarkable teacher. I found myself notably influenced by his personality, and always to my betterment. A pity that there are not more of his kind.

Another noted acquaintance of this period developed into a real friend. Today undoubtedly Dr. A. E. Winship, editor of the New England Journal of Education, educator, writer, lecturer, is the most widely known man in the educational field in America. He has a remarkable flair for retaining names and faces and of interesting himself in school activities. He has spoken in every state in the union, and has crossed the continent scores of times. In the past forty years he

has traveled over two million miles and spoken at thousands of educational meetings. He is always interesting and interested, easily the most popular platform man in the educational field.

It was one day in the early 90's that Smith showed me one of the early copies of The Philistine, and the Little Journey to the Home of Jane Austen. I immediately subscribed for the Philistine and ordered from Putman's, who then published the "Little Journeys," all the booklets of the series. I was much interested in the personality that could produce this unique material. And thus it was through Smith that I came into acquaintance with Elbert Hubbard, the fourth man of this distinguished group of personal friends. My Educational Bureau was languishing. I had "managed" Smith threadbare. The thought occurred to me that Hubbard might be available talent. In the meantime my bookman friend, Karl Goodwin, of Chicago, wrote me he had attended a parlor affair in Chicago and had heard Hubbard speak most interestingly on art. I at once wrote Hubbard. He replied that he had not engaged in regular platform work but that he would be in Chicago in a month and might arrange for a brief run into Iowa if I still so desired. I immediately engaged him for one week. I had no difficulty in booking him for six consecutive nights. I paid him three hundred dollars and expenses, and cleared over five hundred dollars in the venture. It is needless to say this was before Hubbard and Major Pond discovered each other. I was with him much of the time, and the week was full of interesting and

amusing experiences. The result of my association with Hubbard on this tour was a close friendship that continued until his untimely death. Elbert Hubbard was a genius, and hence was either well loved or well hated. Intimate association with him for several years never dimmed my admiration nor lessened my respect. Contact with him was refreshing. I am glad to have experienced it.

The first engagement was at my home town, Cedar Falls. After the lecture we had at my home a symposium attended by a few congenial souls who were desirous of meeting the gifted editor of the Philistine. Among those whom I had invited was the Honorable Charles E. Pickett, of Waterloo, a close friend and a connoisseur of literary bonbons. It so happened that, shortly before, I had perpetrated a little joke on Pickett and had been awaiting the proper opportunity to announce it. At dinner I proceeded to relate this incident: I had come into possession of a most interesting love letter written some years before by Arthur F. Anundsen, a brilliant young attorney of Decorah, Iowa. This letter was clothed in choice English and savored just enough of the risque to make it unusual. I copied it, put on it the caption "An Unpublished Letter of Lord Byron," and, backed by a proper tale of its discovery by Edwin Ginn, passed it off on Pickett as a bona fide Byron production. He in turn had distributed it in good faith to several friends.

Hubbard enjoyed the joke immensely and read with apparent interest the original copy of the Lord

Byron letter which I then handed him. I did not notice that he put it into his pocket. A few months later it appeared in "The Philistine" caption and all, just as I had copied it, but without a single word of explanation. The joke was now on me, as I had no authority from Mr. Anundsen to make this public use of his private letter. Its publication brought forth many inquiries from the literati as to its authenticity. Hubbard evidently took great pleasure in sending these along to me. He never answered any of them, so far as I know. The nearest approach to an explanation of the origin of this Byron letter was when, shortly before Hubbard's death, it was reprinted by request in "The Philistine." This contained the note that the manuscript "was found under a cabbage leaf by Ali Baba."

In the December 1900 number of "The Philistine" I was made the innocent victim of Hubbard's spirit of mischief. It was with the greatest difficulty that I convinced my friends that there was not a shred of fact in the following sketch entitled "A Study in Brown."

"In the Lake Shore Train No. 32 leaves Toledo at 8:50 A.M. and arrives at Cleveland at 11:25, stopping at Sandusky and Elyria. The distance is one hundred & eleven miles. Laylander took this train, he told me, on the morning of July 23rd, 1900. This train, known as "The Fast Mail," is made up of a dozen mail cars and one passenger coach at the end. Formerly the entire train was made up of mail cars alone, but the traveling public importuned the

management until the one coach was added, this as a matter of accommodation. The train making very fast time, this one coach is naturally well filled by people who wish to arrive.

"On the occasion mentioned, nearly every seat was taken. Back by the door on the obsolete woodbox, now used as a receptacle for the trainmen's lanterns, sat a solitary woman. This woman was an arrangement in Brown, her dress being a dark brown, her waist of a lighter shade of brown, the veil matched the skirt; and upon her wide-brimmed hat was a drooping melancholy ostrich feather of a shade that matched the waist. To complete the costume there were brown gloves of undressed kid. It was a chromatic ensemble worthy of Sammy the Artist.

"Laylander entered the coach just as the train was pulling out, and meditatively walked the length of the car looking for a vacant seat. Laylander is big, towsled, homely, awkward, but carries a look of power and intelligence that only the Discerning detect. The Vision in Brown on the woodbox, at the extreme corner, half caught Laylander's attention, but made no special impression. He walked on down toward the woodbox, crowned with its precious freight. As none of the persons occupying seats alone offered to push over and welcome a stranger, Laylander moved on in a sort of brown study toward the Study in Brown, growing more and more aware of the Presence with each step; still, he did not look toward the lady — he was just aware she was there, that's all. He intended to go through to the rear door, make

a bluff at getting a drink of water, then turn back and make one of the swine move over.

"Just before he reached the water-cooler, a brakeman pushed in ahead of him, and said in a brakeman's gutteral, meant to be kind, 'Here Lady — I have a seat for you — this way, please — is this your grip?' The lady half smiled, but did not move. Then she said in a quiet but perfectly audible voice, 'No, that valise is not mine. I am very comfortable here. I am holding this seat — holding it for my friend!' and she looked straight into the eyes of Laylander, who was vulcanizing in a way that might have been regarded as rude, attracted by the drooping, melancholy ostrich feather, and the sweetest voice he had ever heard. The lady smiled, and the lines around Laylander's mouth grew tight in an attempt to meet his vis-a-vis half way. She made a motion to draw her skirts close, so as to make room on the woodbox. Laylander removed his hat like a wooden automaton, wondering where he had ever met this woman before. He sat down but didn't say anything because there was really nothing to say. The woman was a superb creature. Laylander had taken all that in; she was an aristocrat from the toe of her flat-heeled, broad-soled English shoe to the tip of the drooping melancholy feather. She was such a thorough aristocrat that she was also a thorough democrat. The sweat was beginning to stand out on Laylander's forehead, and he was going to say something about the weather, when the low & gentle voice said, semi-confidentially, 'We have never met before,

so do not try to locate me. If we had ever seen each other before this we would not have to strive to remember the occasion. Do you like Maeterlinck'?

"Now it so happened that Laylander was charged with Maeterlinck to the point of saturation. He said 'Why, goodness, yes'! Then they talked of Maeterlinck. 'He is as universal as Whitman, only Whitman is never pierced by the world-sorrow. Whitman is so full of courage that it gives one courage to read him, yet Maeterlinck is more subtle,' said the lady. 'Ah, yes! Whitman is masculine, while Maeterlinck is evidently the son of his mother. His best characteristics are distinctly feminine — he is like Frederick Nietzsche.' Then the lady confirmed Laylander's statement by a quotation from Nietzsche, and reaching into a brown-trimmed Boston bag, which she held in her hands, she drew forth Nietzsche's last book of essays, and read half a page aloud, leaning over toward the big Laylander. This reminded Laylander of something in Ibsen's 'Ghosts' and he drew the book out of the side pocket of his coat. Then they conversed — 'communed' is the word Laylander used in telling me about it — communed concerning the philosophy of Whitman, Nietzsche and Maeterlinck. 'This, I think, is Sandusky,' said Laylander peering out of the window. 'Oh, no, we stopped for five minutes at Sandusky — it must have been over an hour ago. We are just running into the Cleveland Union Station — this is where I get off.' The train stopped. Laylander took the Boston bag and followed down the aisle. He walked

dumbly by the lady's side to the entrance of the waiting room. Then they paused there and looked at each other just an instant. Laylander quite forgot to hand the lady her property — he stood clutching the Boston bag in both hands as if it might fly away. She gently took the satchel from him with one hand, and lifting her brown veil with the other, said softly, 'I do not know your name — I do not wish to. You do not know mine. Let it remain so. Probably we shall never meet again. You may kiss me if you wish' and she stepped close and stood on tip-toe . . ."

Hubbard not only invented the story but, as I afterwards learned, he had sent advance sheets of it to a number of my friends, that they might have a partnership interest in the joke on me. To make matters worse, Dr. Winship, always anxious to share in any fun at my expense, proceeded to print in his New England Journal of Education what purported to be a corroboration of the yarn, under the caption of "An Arrangement in Green." In this an Iowa school ma'am commented upon the unconventional procedure cleverly depicted in the "Study in Brown," claiming that she was in the car at the time, and actually witnessed the sentimental and thrilling parting of Mr. Laylander and the Study. I began to wish the story had been true.

On one occasion I showed Hubbard, not for publication, but as a matter of interest, an ingenious bit of literature entitled "The Charge to a Brother Walt," compiled by Doctor Beardshear, then president of the Iowa State College at Ames. I explained that at

my request Dr. Beardshear had prepared this rosary of Whitman quotations for use in the ritual of the Walt Whitman Club, of which I shall speak later. I was greatly surprised and not a little disconcerted to see it appear without authorization or explanation in a subsequent number of "The Philistine." A newspaper man who welcomed an opportunity to attack Beardshear recognized the Whitman phraseology, and charged Beardshear with plagiarism. The critic did not know his Whitman well enough to understand that the composition was made up entirely of quotations from "Leaves of Grass" joined into a harmonious whole. As a piece of rhetorical artistry this mosaic is worth preserving:

"He who aspires to be a Brother Walt must know the earth as his mother, the light as his father, the wind as his friend, the water as his kinsman, the sky as his brother, the animal and the plant as kindred spirits. He must understand that you are I, and I am you, and what has happened that you and I am I, and that I and you are you.

He must magnify and apply himself, lithografing Kronus, Zeus his son, & Hercules his grandson, buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha; placing Manito in his portfolio, Allah on a leaf, securing the crucifix engraved, and not forgetting Odin & the hideous-faced Mexitli, and every idol and image — taking them all for what they are worth to feel the puzzle of puzzles that we call Being. He must be afoot with his vision until it fails him, then loaf and invite his soul. He must undrape and sing of himself. What is a man anyhow? What am I? What are you?

Consider why you extract strength from the beef you eat, and whether you can dare wear your hat indoors or outdoors as you please. With your foothold tenoned & mortist in granite, you will

need to pry thru the strata, analyse to a hair and counsel with doctors, until you find no sweeter fat than that that sticks to your own bones. You will need to understand that the converging objects of the universe are written to you in perpetual flow, and your mission is to get the meaning of their writing. You must understand that it is as great to be a woman as to be a man, and that there is nothing greater than the mother of men. However big you are in office or your own wisdom, you must quit your ducking and comprehend that size is only development. In your soul you must swear that you will weigh the White House in the balance of a personal worth, & that you will never deny the man-drudge of the cellar. That you will seize the descending man and say as a brother to him —

> Oh despairer, here is my neck.
> By the Almighty, you shall not go down!
> Hang your whole weight on me!

You are not askt to give lectures nor a little charity, but to give yourself. You are to be a learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfulest, a novice beginning and the experient in myriads of seasons; to sympathize with every rank and religion; to be farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, seller, Quaker, express-driver, hod-carrier, foreman, prisoner, fancy man, rowdy, lawyer, fysician and priest. Your sphere is to incarnate the Southerner as soon as the Northerner, the Yankee, Canadian, Newfoundler, Hoosier, Badger, Buckeye, Hawkeye, the comrade of Californians, the free Northwesterners, (loving their big proportions), the comrade of all who shake hands and welcome to meat and drink and freely, fully, truly, to put yourself on record as from America sent. You must know that it is not only good to gain the day, but that it is good to fall, and that the spirit of lost battles at the bottom is the same as those won. You must be proud of no greater level than that by which you build your own house. You are forever to hurrah for positive science and a long life to exact demonstration. For lexicografer, chemist, mariner, geologist, astronomer, mathematician, you must bring third-month twigs mixt with cedar and branches of lilacs,

and enter by them the royal area of your own dwelling. You will need to unscrew the locks on your doors, the doors themselves from their jambs; mindful that whoever degrades another, degrades himself; that you are divine inside and out; that the body is the condition of civilization, the royal channelway & great highway of travel between the unseen and the seen, between God and the soul, and that the integral man is as delicate around his bowels as around the head and the heart.

It is your privilege to behold the daybreak and to find the morning-glory at your window, giving you greater satisfaction than the metafysics of books. As a Brother Walt, you are a kosmos, not only a son of Manhattan, but a citizen of the Universe. The minute that comes to you from the past decillions is no better than now, and the sublime wonder under all of these Universes is always and always how there can be a mean man or an infidel. All things are yours, the new and the antique, the Greek and the Germanic systems, Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, the stated lore of Plato, greater than Socrates sought and stated the Christ divine — fylosofies all, churches all, tenets all, yet underneath all, the dear love of man for his comrade. Yours is the joy of a belief that a leaf of grass is no less than the journey work of the stars, that a running blackberry would adorn the parlors of Heaven, and that a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels. In the night-time it is yours to hear among the still little bells of your ear the distinctive voices echoing to the plaudits of your name at the Capitol during the day, and not to be happy for that; to hear the "Well done" of worthy plans accomplisht, and still not be happy for that; to reflect that I am I, you are you, nature is nature, God is God, and that I, a comrade, am coming to you with the scents of the wild woods and the pond-sides, with the breaking of the dawn.

Two comrades are a multitude. They know that whoever walks a furlong without sympathy, walks to his own funeral dresst in a shroud. Tho they may be pocketless of dimes, they may purchase the pick of the earth. A glance of their eyes, as a bean in its pod, confounds the learning of all times, and with a trade or employ-

ment, they may become a hub for the wheeled universe and heroes ranking above the warring gods of granite covered centuries.

They do not say things for a dollar or to fill up the time while waiting for a boat. They are fond of a sweetheart, and relish a steak. They are first rate to ride, to fight, to hit the bull's eye, to sail a skiff, to sing a song and play on the banjo; preferring scars and the beard and the faces pitted with small pox over all latherers, and those well tanned to those that keep out of the sun. They are the clocks of themselves. They are not contained between their hats and their boots, and know how it stings to be slighted. To them the city invisible and invincible to the attacks of the whole earth, is the new city of Friends.

It is the mission of a Brother Walt to plant companionship thick as trees along the Rivers of America, and along the shores of the Great Lakes, and all over the prairies, and to make inseparable cities by the life-long love of comrades. Our tokens are a sprig of lilac with a branch of pine, a bunch of wild orange, and calamus root, fresh scented of the pond-side. It is time to explain myself — let us stand up. Shoulder your duds, dear son, and I will mine and let us hasten forth. Wonderful cities and free nations we shall fetch as we go. If you tire, give me both burdens and rest the chuff of your hand on my hip.

And in due time you shall repay the same service to me. For after we start we never lie by again."

One of the most enjoyable diversions of this period was in connection with this Walt Whitman Club of Iowa Schoolmasters. The early days of the club were intentionally shrouded in mystery. Strict secrecy was exacted of the members. None but the members knew that the purposes were not primarily literary; that it was in fact a gridiron organization, to which only those known to have a full sense of humor could be elected; a center of camaraderie and wit that has had

vitality enough to carry it already through more than thirty years, and has had on its roll many of the brightest and best men of the state. It had its inception in 1895 when J. T. Merrill, then superintendent at Cedar Rapids, was my guest. We were discussing Whitman's philosophy when he observed, "Why don't you organize a Walt Whitman Club now that you are interested in spreading the gospel? Start with the State Teachers' Association." This we proceeded to do at the holiday meeting. Merrill, Sessions, and I drew up organization papers, notified a group of congenial fellows, and launched the club with the following members: J. T. Merrill, F. T. Oldt, George I. Miller, F. J. Sessions, S. H. Sheakley, W. D. Wells, L. E. A. Ling, W. W. Rodwell, Sherman Yates, W. F. Chevalier, W. A. Doron, Charles E. Shelton, O. J. Laylander.

Merrill was elected "Chief Walt" for life and I secretary. The club is still in existence. The annual meetings of the club at Des Moines were a source of keen enjoyment. Each meeting provided for the admission of three new members. These were selected with a view of their adaptation to the requirements. Repartee and good fellowship were essential qualities, for many of these meetings were occasions of real brilliancy. The ritual prepared by the facile Doctor Eastman was a work of art, and the initiation ceremony was unique. I have related how the "charge" of this initiation was accidentally made public. It is about the only thing identified with the club that does savor of the literary. The club had more laughs in it

than its members could have possibly found elsewhere. The best evidence that this organization has real merit is that it refuses to die.

My work at Cedar Falls was rapidly drawing to a close. It was my desire to see built a new high school commensurate with the needs of the community. When we got ready to issue a call for a bond vote we discovered that in a recent code revision the provision for special elections had been inadvertently omitted. The legislature was in session, and although within a fortnight of adjournment we got the provision restored and proceeded with our plans. Against my protest the school board named this fine new building in my honor. A few years later their successors, very properly I think, rescinded this action. Schools should be named only for dead men and usually the deader the better.

I was constantly urged by young Bellows to abandon school work and go to Ginn and Company. I confess I was tempted. I chafed under the collar. The far future had few allurements. My job was too easy. My outside contacts had inspired me to more important undertakings than the school field offered. Moreover my home had been broken up through the passing of my invalid wife. I was at sea as to the future.

About this time I was led into real temptation through a visit from two members of the Des Moines school board, Mr. Louis Kurtz and Mr. Will C. Harbach, who were on a junketing tour with a view to selecting a new superintendent for the Des Moines

schools. I did not make application as I could not overcome my misgivings as to the desirability of any school position, but I did make the acquaintance of two royal fellows. Twenty years later Harbach became my nearest neighbor and constant playmate at my summer home in northern Michigan.

In the fall of 1899 I was visited by Mr. T. W. Gilson, the Chicago manager of Ginn and Company, who announced that he came to make a final appeal to me to represent them in the field. He convinced me that opportunity was knocking at my door as he outlined to me the possibilities of a connection with this rapidly growing concern. He was my benefactor, for he initiated for me a course that has never been marked by a day of drudgery or of fear, but crowded full of welcome work and of happy associations.

For six lively years my work was in Iowa. In the meantime I married Esther Whitney of Cedar Falls and reëstablished a home there. The ever-open house plan inaugurated by my wife has prevailed through all the years and has added much to the joy of living. I found my new work refreshing. I enjoyed the release from the narrowing limitations of school associations and threw into the new work my entire energy.

Some of the contests of this period were unsavory, for the school book business was not yet free from features that had marked the fierce battles of the leaders in the previous decade. The work provided sufficient variety to be interesting. Occasional situations arose that were not without humor.

In one instance I met a country board that seemed

favorable to the adoption of my books but were so unbusinesslike that I could not lead them to vote. As no one seemed likely to make a motion I concluded to do it myself, and after an hour of futile waiting said, "In order to get the question before you I move that the following books be adopted and the president and secretary be authorized to enter into a contract for the use of the books for five years as provided by law." The chairman put the motion and it was carried six to one. The books were introduced and were continued in use for more than a dozen years.

Today textbooks are largely chosen by teachers and superintendents. In those days the influence of the teacher was negligible. School boards were the objectives. The best agent was the smartest one, and there were a lot of them who were in Class A. I made the acquaintance of a brilliant group, of which Chandler, Burkert, Andress, and McGinnis — names known throughout the middle west — were types. The veterans of today were then in the kindergarten. It was this younger group that were to be my life associates, for in May 1906 Mr. Gilson was called to Boston, and I succeeded to his Chicago position.

CHAPTER NINE

AMONG THE BOOKS

Only an occasional person realizes how important a factor is the schoolbook publisher in the educational affairs of the country. The vocation on the whole is a pleasurable one, but it calls for accurate knowledge of educational conditions and movements, and wise forethought. Mr. Crawley, in The American Mercury, says the publisher studies to "make school books foolproof," and there is considerable truth in the statement. He must have a wide acquaintance with potential producers and the skill to enlist their interest and secure their services. Today it is a matter of the publisher seeking the author rather than the author seeking the publisher. To make books costs money. It is not an unusual thing for a large publishing house to invest from fifty thousand to a hundred thousand dollars in the preliminary work necessary to the making of a series that promises to meet with a large sale. But even the best schoolbooks will not sell themselves. They must be exploited, and not by ordinary salesmen but by men of culture and personality who are thoroughly familiar with current educational movements and tendencies. In short, the modern schoolbook field man must be an educator plus.

The manager of the sales department of a large

educational publishing house thus finds himself surrounded by interesting people; salesmen, authors, educators. It is an atmosphere conducive to intellectual pleasures. It was into this atmosphere that I came in the spring of 1906 when, in the Chicago office of Ginn and Company, I became the manager of the elementary school department. I rather reluctantly left Iowa, where for six years I had represented the company in the field, for I had misgivings as to my ability to meet the unknown responsibilities of the new position. I had been in Chicago only a few weeks when an unusual opportunity opened before me.

There was dissension in the Board of Education. Mayor Dunne had succeeded Carter Harrison and the newly appointed members carried tomahawks. This "Dunne board" was savagely attacked by the Chicago Tribune, which looked askance at the proposed taxation schemes. The board as a whole had in its membership some very interesting people. Doctor R. A. White, the eloquent divine, who for a quarter of a century had been an outstanding figure in civic life was a hold-over from the Carter Harrison regime. There was Louis Post, the socialist editor, keen of mind, and wielding a trenchant pen. There was Cornelia DeBey, as eccentric in dress as Dr. Mary Walker, but possessed of positive convictions and the ability to promulgate them. And there was P. Shelley O'Ryan, the gifted orator and successful attorney, much loved by all who knew him.

The old board had been badly split owing to a

political controversy which involved influential friends of the publishing house of Rand, McNally and Company, which, incidentally, was furnishing the reading books for the schools. O'Ryan was the recognized leader of the Rand, McNally group. Edwin G. Cooley, a Harrison protégé, the superintendent of schools, was favorable to a change of books. As I had known Cooley intimately in his school career in Iowa, and looked upon him as a friend, I consulted him as to the advisability of entering the contest with the Jones Readers, published by Ginn and Company. He assured me that it was useless, as he had already recommended the books of The Macmillan Company and that doubtless his recommendation would be considered favorably. After a little scouting I found that Mr. Cooley was mistaken. I frankly told him so. A few days later he called me up and said that it began to look like any man's game. I lost no time in getting into it. I hastened to enlist all available help, both agents and firm members, and made a thorough campaign. One of the first to respond was Mr. T. B. Lawler, of the New York partners. His service was invaluable.

It soon developed that the Macmillan and the Rand, McNally forces were about evenly divided, with the balance of power in the few unorganized outside votes in this board of twenty-one members.

In the meantime, through Mr. H. P. Conway, who later became a firm member of Ginn and Company, I secured favorable entrée to P. Shelley O'Ryan, who seemed to me to be the key to the situation. I assured

him that I appreciated his loyalty to his friends and had no desire to dissuade him from his course, and that I appealed to him only on the ground of second choice, if this became necessary. If he would permit me to acquaint him with my books I in turn might give him some aid in shooting at the common enemy. I think he knew how well I liked him, for he was very kind, considerate, and confidential. We kept in close touch with him, cemented our own outside support, and awaited developments, feeling that finally there would be a break. But the board went into session that late August evening with no one able to count noses surely. A half dozen publishing houses had made the usual canvass without making progress. The situation was tense. After an hour or two of fencing by various members Mr. O'Ryan realized that he was championing a hopeless cause, and that the time had come for action. Securing the floor he proceeded for forty minutes in a most eloquent manner to execrate his opponent's books and disclosed a marvelous familiarity with them. Then, to the surprise of the listeners, with equal force he proceeded to exalt, not the books of his first choice, but the Jones Readers, and closed with a motion for their adoption. The motion carried, and my first big battle was won for me by General O'Ryan.

The opposition sought delay, declaring that with the opening of the schools only three weeks away it was a physical impossibility to get the requisite supply of nearly a quarter of a million books on the ground in time. Here my good friend, Dr. White, called on me to

announce whether we could guarantee delivery. I knew we probably would have to manufacture the bulk of the supply, but I responded promptly: "Certainly, I would be willing to put up a hundred-thousand-dollar bond to that effect." They called the bluff and exacted the bond. A long distance telephone to Boston started the wheels. I think it was rather remarkable that, although when this message was sent the paper and cloth for the edition were yet unbought, the entire supply was manufactured, shipped by express, and distributed within the three weeks prescribed in the bond.

Naturally I was elated over this victory and inspired with new zeal, for it was our first worthwhile break into the elementary book list of Chicago, although we had good representation in the high schools. This department was under the direction of Henry H. Hilton. Although ten years younger than I, he had been a member of the firm since he was twenty-six, and now became the general manager of the Chicago field. Prior to my accession to my new position I saw very little of Mr. Hilton. My work was under the direction of Mr. Gilson, and I had no occasion to consult any one else. Indeed I was somewhat prejudiced against Hilton. I believed that he had accepted my promotion with some reservations, and I shared in the feeling of many that Hilton preferred to hold himself aloof from plebeians. How this impression was intensified by an incident that happened years before I shall now relate.

Prior to my connection with the company, while I

was still an Iowa schoolmaster, it happened that there met one day in Chicago Superintendent J. T. Merrill, of Cedar Rapids; James A. Edwards, the publisher of the Iowa Normal Monthly, and I. Mr. Merrill knew Mr. Gilson and proposed that we call on him. I think we were a fairly representative Iowa group. Father Merrill was no Beau Brummel, but he had a goodly supply of brains, was entertaining in conversation, magnetic though blunt, and seldom erred in his judgments. Edwards, fierce-eyed, heavily bearded, unshapely, needed no make-up to take the part of a stage villain. I was a rollicking Newfoundland pup that happened to be born a schoolmaster. Gilson took us to luncheon, and invited young Hilton, who had recently come from Boston to be Gilson's associate, to join us. It was evident that this motley corn-fed group jarred the sensibilities of the reserved, dignified youth, who was later to become one of the big factors in Ginn and Company. Gilson was past forty and thoroughly acclimated to the west. He was a genial soul, gifted with keen discernment and possessing a high sense of humor. It was plain that Gilson was enjoying the occasion. He liked his Iowa exhibit partly on their own account and, I think now, partly because of the effect on Hilton. At any rate he succeeded in getting all the animals to perform fully and naturally and to his entire satisfaction. When we were again alone we appraised the two men: we voted Gilson a fine fellow, and Hilton hopeless.

We were mistaken. It was a case of greenness measuring greenness. Time was about to tune a raw

Yankee to catch the spirit of the west, and time was about to wear the rough corners off an uncouth Iowa youth. Little we dreamed that a few years later we were to be thrown into the close companionship of daily contact as partners. And so my introduction to the real Hilton did not occur until my advent to Chicago. It has been one of the large compensations of my work, and hence an important factor in my contentment, that my daily association has been with this man, one on whom I could rely in any emergency; one who was big enough to change his mind and who always had a mind; one whose life was governed by justice, charity and good will; one who has lived more for others than for himself.

After three years of strenuous but joyous work I was suddenly subjected to a considerable temptation. My friend, Edwin Bellows, who had steered me into this work now attempted to steer me out. He wished me to join him in a very profitable publishing concern which he had organized on his retirement from Ginn and Company several years before. He pointed out to me that I was inadequately paid and was so circumscribed that I could never hope for any considerable promotion. He offered me a generous salary and an interest in the business, and assured me that certain success awaited me if I would unite with him. I decided to consult the wise men of the east. Mr. Gilson met me in New York for a conference with Mr. George A. Plimpton and Mr. R. S. Thomas, senior members of the firm. All three advised me to stick to the ship. They assured me that I had demonstrated capacity

and that it would be a mistake to leave. I was impressed with the fact that I was in the company of big men and that I might be passing up fine associations, but, aside from Mr. Gilson, I could not detect any notable interest in my problem. I was still in doubt at the conclusion of the luncheon. On the way back to the office Mr. Plimpton talked to me alone and more directly. He said, "Laylander, make no mistake. You cannot afford to leave us and we can't afford to let you go. What we need more than anything else is western vigor and push and good red blood. Go back to Chicago and forget it. In the language of Pericles," — here he spun a long quotation in Greek and quickly added, "Isn't that so?" I replied, "Mr. Plimpton, if you will turn that into Pennsylvania Dutch I'll answer you. As it is I don't know what you are talking about." "Don't you know Greek?" he responded. "No," said I, "I do not, and I don't know how in the devil I got that Chicago adoption without it." The twinkle in his eye was the most reassuring thing I had yet seen. "Well," said he, "you are going to stay anyway," and I decided right then and there that I would stay. I also decided that I liked Mr. Plimpton.

Whether one's work becomes a pleasure or drifts into drudgery depends a great deal on the kind of people with whom he is thrown into constant association. I regard it an important factor in my contentment that my work was of a character that drew me into association chiefly with interesting people.

First, there was the agency group, forty or fifty

men carefully chosen because they were out of the ordinary, for the most part men of culture and of discernment. Some of these had been in service much longer than I, some were newcomers, but all were loyal, helpful, and interesting. It was the sort of soil in which friendships root deeply.

Then there was the educator group. The work of the educational publisher naturally leads him into a study of and acquaintance with those who are directing the education of the youth of the country. It is from these sources that he must choose authors. It is the tastes and desires of these he must satisfy and an acquaintance with them is not only desirable but almost necessary. This enlargement of the circle of my opportunities was entirely to my liking. An honest-to-God ranking of the first fifty educators of the country, arranged according to size, would be an interesting study. All is not gold that glitters and among those present even in the ranks of the higher-ups in education one finds an occasional educational four-flusher. One can scarcely fail to be impressed with the great numbers of big, strong men in the educational field whose names seldom get even into local headlines.

A third group was that of the authors. Here the relations are such that there is opportunity for intimate acquaintance with the personalities that are back of successful books. I found it very pleasing in those earlier days to come under the charm of genial souls like Alexis E. Frye and George Wentworth; to feel that David Eugene Smith was

not only a great author, but so lovable and companionable that he filled a particular longing. It was pleasant to be led into the lives of little children by Walter Taylor Field, and to be impressed through him with the power of gentleness and peace. It was entertaining to see the learned Doctor Kittredge fighting the hornets of criticism. It is gratifying to have personal relations with and to know the human side of such world leaders in their respective fields as Professor Breasted, James Harvey Robinson, Professor Millikan, and others of the same class.

I saw early that I had made no mistake. It was these worth while human experiences rather than money that were to contribute to my content.

It is probable that there is no other press in the world, devoted exclusively to the publishing of school text books, better known than that of Ginn and Company. Its partnership of eighteen members is one of the largest in the country. It is this form of organization that has given to the concern a certain family spirit that pervades its entire operation. The privilege of intimate association with men of the standing, character and intelligence of these and their able successors has been an important and a constant factor in my attainment of content.

When I came into firm membership in 1909 the firm was composed of the following men: Edwin Ginn, George A. Plimpton, Lewis Parkhurst, H. H. Hilton, C. H. Thurber, R. S. Thomas, T. W. Gilson, T. B. Lawler, and F. W. Ambrose. I felt unacquainted with most of the group except Gilson and Hilton. The

gentle, kind Gilson had been my first director and my benefactor. From him I learned most valuable lessons in human relations. Mr. Gilson died in 1914. Mr. Ambrose later resigned and Mr. Thomas died in 1923.

I was at first little more than an observing student in my attendance at these firm meetings. I was receiving impressions to be utilized in my own activities later.

I confess I stood somewhat in awe of Edwin Ginn. He was no ordinary man. He was a genius, and had the unbounded faith that characterizes those who are greater than they themselves know. He saw visions and dreamed dreams, and lived to see many of his fondest dreams come true.

His early life did not differ greatly from that of many boys of his time. He was born on a Maine farm, worked in logging camps and on fishing vessels, taught school, saved his money, and paid his way through college. He often said that he was "blessed with poverty," and no doubt that was a helpful factor in his development. But back of it all was something big. Nature had endowed him with an indomitable will and unusual foresight. Without money and without experience he embarked in the business of which he was to make a tremendous success.

The Edwin Ginn that I met in my first attendance at a firm meeting had traveled a long road. He was nominally the head of the powerful concern that bore his name. He had interested himself in social

economics and had built the Charles Banks Homes. He had pledged the income of a million dollars for the promotion of international peace. In the days when "trusts" were in the air, and practically all the other schoolbook publishing concerns were consolidated under one management, he bravely resisted all advances, determined that nothing short of utter ruin should efface the identity of his business.

He was a big man and I was rather self-conscious in his presence. I imagined that my short a's and full length r's and western brusqueness disturbed his sensibilities somewhat. Moreover I had heard the story of the resignation of one of his early agents. This young man was rather pompous, quite sure of himself, and not always sure of Mr. Ginn. He decided to quit and to join a former associate of Mr. Ginn in a rival business. When he went into Mr. Ginn's office to break the news, Mr. Ginn was seated at his desk writing. He glanced over his shoulder, saw his caller seated in the rear of the room, and continued writing. After waiting several minutes the impatient, lordly young man remarked, "Mr. Ginn, I came to hand you my resignation." Without turning around, Mr. Ginn threw up his hands, still grasping the pen, and exclaimed, "God is very good to me sometimes!"

I had never seen Mr. Ginn alone and I was not particularly anxious to do so. While I knew that Mr. Ginn always appreciated productive work, and I knew that my record was good, I also knew that a competitor on whose toes I had been forced to trample had attempted to discredit me with Mr.

Ginn. I had been told that Mr. Ginn was very wary in swallowing bait, and I felt that I had friends at court who would not permit any imposition, yet I thought it wiser to become mutually better acquainted before raising the question. It was never raised.

At this first meeting I was impressed with the fact that Mr. Ginn was then comparatively inactive in the essential details of the business. He was a sort of supreme judge. The real Ginn and Company was Plimpton, Parkhurst, Hilton, Thurber and Thomas. They were directing and controlling the policies. In the discussions the sallies of wit, the maneuvering between Mr. Ginn, and Plimpton and Parkhurst were diverting and extremely interesting. Sometimes the two kingbirds chased the crow for hours before he gave up the unequal contest and retired. I think Mr. Ginn really enjoyed many of these discussions. Nor could he help being proud of the fact that it was his remarkable talent in choosing and keeping men of unusual strength on whom to pass along the burdens, that made these encounters possible and necessary.

Mr. Plimpton especially interested me, for he it was, as I have already related, who shook me into shape when I was wavering in my course. He well deserved to be a leader in the direction of company affairs, for he had been a partner for already twenty-eight years at the time of this meeting. In an extremely busy life he found time for a most pleasing diversion. Early he interested himself in old manuscripts and books disclosing the evolution of modern

educational texts, and today his rare collection is said to be the largest of its kind in the world. His illuminating lectures on this material are in wide demand among educational people. I have learned many things from Mr. Plimpton, and since the purpose of this record is to evaluate the influences that have been formative in my own contentment, I will state my chief indebtedness to him: He has demonstrated that a man can be distinguished, influential, prosperous, and yet not lose his soul. He earned and abundantly deserved all the good that has come his way. I found it worth while to associate with those who were right at heart in their personal and business dealings.

It was a good day for Mr. Ginn when he called Parkhurst from the field to be his constant advisor in connection with the many problems incident to the home office. Parkhurst thus occupied a distinctive position, for his contact was constant and Mr. Ginn leaned on him heavily. I marveled in those early days of my experience at the work of Parkhurst and his associates in developing the great growing press and in steering the financial ship.

As I studied Parkhurst in the first firm meetings that I attended, I recognized in him not only a keen, broad-minded, sympathetic, just man, but one of noticeable courage and finesse. An incident in his early life confirms my opinion that these qualities were not wholly cultivated.

According to the map, at the tip of Cape Cod is historic Provincetown, and, if we may believe the

monument that marks its history, the Pilgrim Fathers first landed there, but not finding it a desirable place to nest turned back and went up the coast. At any rate, there is the monument, and it stands on the exact spot where sixty years ago there was a town hall which during the winter months was used as a schoolroom. It was a mongrel lot that gathered there, made up largely of the younger group from the whaling vessels that were laid up for the winter, — all sorts, sizes, ages, and nationalities.

It was customary for Dartmouth College to send some husky teacher to Provincetown each winter to rule this motley crew. In the winter of 1876 this lot fell to Lewis Parkhurst. His first day was not a glorious one. These Spanish, Portugese, and native toughs were not a promising group as they sat on the improvised wooden benches and sized up the young schoolmaster. At the close of an uncertain day the place was foul with tobacco juice, quids, and various other kinds of dirt. That night young Parkhurst had the place thoroughly cleaned. Then he prefaced the morning's work with a little speech. He said, "Boys, I never learned to chew tobacco. I have no objection to any one else's doing so if that is what he wants to do. Let us agree on the time and the place. Last night I had this room scrubbed clean, and I want you to help me to keep it that way. Now, at the end of one hour I am going to give you a chewing recess. Then we will all go outdoors and you can chew and spit to your heart's content for ten minutes. Then we will come back, keep the room clean, and if after another hour

you want to chew again, we will have another recess."

For the most part the day proceeded orderly. There was one exception. One of the group was apparently itching to test the young schoolmaster's temper. At last under the very eye of the teacher he took out a plug of "navy" and bit off a large mouthful. "Stop that. Out with it!" called Parkhurst, and started for the rebellious youth. He made a rush for the door but the teacher beat him to it; then a race back of the benches around the room to a partly open window. The son of the sea was half through the window when the husky Parkhurst jerked him back, threw him violently to the floor, and cautioned him to lie right there until he told him to get up. And he did.

There was no more trouble in the Provincetown school that term. On the last day of school the sailor youth whom Parkhurst had so promptly and effectually subdued brought the teacher a present, curios that he had collected on voyages, and assured his beloved teacher that he would be his friend forever.

In the handling of the very difficult problems that arose in the decade of 1910–20, in his direction and development of the great Athenæum Press, in short, all through that period of my early participations in the firm deliberations, Parkhurst played a leading part, and his procedure was invariably characterized by those qualities that I had ascribed to him in my first appraisement.

Lawler was one partner to whom I warmed up instinctively. In the Chicago campaign where he had

rendered me invaluable service, I had come under the influence of that charm of manner that endears him to all who knew him. He radiated respect and confidence. I was not disappointed in what I was to get from intimate association with him. He has brought to my mill many a grist of good cheer from which I have taken generous toll.

Then there was Thurber. I am told that I am indebted to a piece of pie for the privilege of being associated with this interesting personage. Hilton assures me that but for this extra order which ten years before had prolonged a luncheon with Thurber, they might have parted before the sudden inspiration came to Hilton to interest him in the editorship with Ginn and Company.

Thurber stood out as a distinct figure in this group that I saw in action for the first time. Although a New Yorker by birth and education he possessed a certain western burliness and confidence that strongly appealed to me. I liked his "show me" attitude. I wondered whether this big-brained, scholarly, masterful man would be to me a source of joy or grief, for I knew that the character of my own work was such that I should inevitably be thrown into closer contact with him than with any of the others. It was joy. Companionships with such rare souls pave the road to contentment.

CHAPTER TEN

WORK AND PLAY

THE fifteen years that followed the record of the preceding chapter were years of almost constant application to the labors incident to a responsible executive position. They were not dulled by a single day of drudgery or of unrewarded toil. There is nothing so satisfying as pleasurable work. The nature of this particular business is such that it calls for a higher order of intelligence and culture among the employees than obtains in ordinary commercial lines. Thus the environment radiated mutual satisfaction. It has been this personal relation side that has contributed so largely to my content. The men and women under my immediate direction seem to ask nothing of me but confidence and appreciation. I have been affected by their loyalty and love. When all is said and done, what greater things are there to be desired?

In this period there were several replacements and highly valuable additions to the firm, younger men of marked power and notable experience, each able to make a distinct contribution both in character and proficiency. One of these — the delectable DeWitt — remarked that he would rather be a partner in this group than be president of the United States; and he meant it, for, like myself, he felt that he was deriving compensations from this association that added more

to the zest of living than he could hope for elsewhere. I have every reason for citing this connection as the biggest factor in my contentment. I have riches that no earthly tax collector can reduce. I have enjoyed the confidence and respect of worth-while men. I have been honored beyond my deserts. My work stands fully rewarded. My philosophy of life has been verified.

I was past middle age before I found myself. The years I spent in school work had a certain value, for I acquired experience that served a good purpose in my later work among the books, but this could scarcely be rated as a prerequisite. There was a by-product, however, that was worth while. It has been a great pleasure as well as a satisfaction to me to be able to assist in the education of a considerable number of young people. I have been careful always to prevent the drifting that was my lot because of lack of intelligent advice. I have attempted to direct the education of these people into channels of interest as determined by natural bent. I have lived to see these efforts rewarded. No other investment has yielded me more satisfactory returns.

I have never had the mania for possessing luxurious things. People have always interested me more than property. My income has been sufficient to enable me in a moderate way to be of some service to a group of deserving people, who, through no fault of their own, were less fortunately conditioned than I. It has been a great joy thus to enlarge the circles of opportunity for them. I confess to a degree of selfishness in this

for the pleasure I got out of it was a greater factor than the sacrifice involved. I get pleasure in spending where another might get his in hoarding.

In creating conditions that contribute to content not less important than one's work is his play. Recreation is a good word — a creating anew. Primarily it is the act of restoring what has previously existed. It is more than simple diversion or change. To be most satisfying it must be rooted in one's inherent desires. Born and reared among the wooded hills of Ohio, I was immersed in the atmosphere of close contact with Nature. I am sorry for the man whose ears are deaf to the "tongues in the trees," who knows not the "books in the running brooks." Burroughs, Burbank, Thoreau, Muir, all such as these hold golden keys to the doors of life. Man may pile the things of the mart mountain high and yet miss the chief joys of life if there is in his soul no response to the music of Nature.

Stuart Eagleson is the Johnny Appleseed of the book fraternity. From the Alleghanies to the Rocky Mountains Eagleson has been for thirty years an educational missionary carrying the news from Aix to Ghent, planting for others to reap, leaving a trail of pleasant memories and good wishes. I am indebted to this big brother Eagleson for directing me into a very lovely path. One day, more than fifteen years ago, discussing with him this subject of proper recreation I said to him, "Stuart, I should like to find a place to build me a home where for a few weeks each year I could repair for repairs. I want the attractions of the

wilderness without going into the wilderness. I want combined the beauties of nature and the comforts of home. I want trees and birds and water and flowers; no undue heat, needless noise, or boisterous pleasure-seekers. These requirements exclude the camp and the ordinary resort. You know the varied Northland. Where should I go?"

"Easiest question you could ask," responded Eagleson. Taking a map of Michigan he pointed to the Mackinac region, and placing his pencil on Burt Lake the Beautiful said, "I know you, and I know this country. You need search no further, for this will fill your bill of particulars and leave you much besides."

So here, by the side of this beautiful lake, fed by a thousand springs, its seventy-five miles of shore line weaving in and out of the woodland, surrounded by plain, honest, decent country folk, in a colony of congenial companions, I built my nest. Here I can listen to the chatter of carefree children, to the songs of the birds, bathe in the sunshine, nurse the green, growing things of the garden and field, revere the constant miracle of the woods, surrender my soul to the subtle powers of the great Mother of us all. To me there is in this something that no circumstances of pomp or power or material wealth may ever eclipse. I am content.

There is something supremely satisfying in mingling with these country folk who call The North Country home. The long vigorous winters that close in on and imprison them for months, the short growing season, necessitating strictest economy of

time, are no doubt factors in the sturdiness and reliability of these people. Most of my neighbors emigrated from Ohio, following the days of slaughter of the millions of pines that covered northern Michigan, and began to reclaim portions of the land for agriculture. I find myself taking a deep personal interest in their farm problems, and I enjoy joining them in their sports. Here and there one finds a unique character. In a nearby village there was one of peculiar interest to me, not that he differed elementally so much from me, or probably from you, as in the form which his expression took. The following incident will illustrate my meaning. Uncle Jimmie had a peculiar habit of talking aloud, not only to himself, but at himself. The game warden had a suspicion that Uncle Jimmie was doing some illicit angling and had resolved to try to catch him in the act. Very early one morning Uncle Jimmie was in his boat, suspiciously headed down the Crooked River. The warden proceeded to execute a detour through the woods and succeeded in creeping up through the brush to within a few feet of Uncle Jimmie, and awaited developments. There stood his victim at the edge of the little cove, engaged in an oral debate with himself whether or not to yield to temptation. He sat on a log, one end of which was lightly caught in the sandy bank, the other end protruding several feet over the deeper water. Uncle Jimmie was peering at something in the water that seemed to fascinate him.

"I see you there, you little devils. You think you're smart now, don'tcha, settin' so still and lookin' so

solemn like? Well, mebbe you are, but I've got something here you'd look at the second time, I guess, if I could only get it in front of your little noses."

He got up, baited his hook, refilled his pipe, took another look into the water, and hesitated. Then the dialogue:

He: "Of course, you might reach 'em if you crawled out on the log."

Himself: "That's purty shaky business for an old cuss like you. Better stay where you're at."

He: "Gosh all hemlock, there's twice-et as many there now as there was a minute ago! I've a notion to resk it."

Himself: "Remember, I told you not to. You're gettin' purty stiff for that kind o' business. You've got to be damn keerful."

And so he was, as slowly, cautiously he felt his way over the slippery log for a few feet; then it yielded to his weight, rolled, broke loose — and splash went Uncle Jimmie up to his neck in the cold water! He waded out and shook himself like a wet dog. In silence he drained his pipe and opened his fishing box for dry matches and dry tobacco. Then, calmly surveying the situation, he turned toward his boat and once more feelingly addressed himself:

"Now, you damned old fool, I hope you're satisfied! You'd better go home." And he did. The warden arrived first, however, and not until the yarn came floating in from various directions did Uncle Jimmie know that he had been overheard.

Then there is Harve. There is only one of him. I could pick him out of a hundred as far as the eye

could reach. Rear view, front view, profile, one as easy to identify as the other. Doubly easy of course if he were in the thirteen-year-old rattle box of a Ford, so unlike the One Hoss Shay in that unfortunately it did not fall to pieces all at once, but persisted in shedding its parts one at a time; or if he were sailing The Tourist that continued to live, move, and have its being years after it should have died. I needed no such assistance.

Mr. Harvey Aufrance, chief guide, crack marksman and skilled in the Walton art, is known to all the hunters and fishermen that have frequented Burt Lake during the last quarter of a century. Some of them came to know him well and fondly; some might advise you to check up on the number of deer that Harve actually got in a hunt, or to count the number of rainbows in the basket after a day at the Big Sturgeon, but every one of them would trust Harve with his last dollar and know that every promise made would be faithfully carried out. Harve has taught more fellows how not to fish than any one I ever knew. He has an almost uncanny way of pulling out fish all around the novice and gradually impressing his student with the full import of "many are called but few chosen." The fact that Harve would scarcely qualify except objectively to teach grammar adds to his charm in narrative. I never tire of learning first hand of his prowess. Both the subject matter and the style interest me greatly. I do not embarrass him, and hence get the best expression. The thing that most endears Harve to me is his faithful-

ness to those whom he knows to be real friends. I am proud to be in this class, and I can think of no physical sacrifice he would not willingly make in order to contribute to my comfort or safety. I am sorry for the man who knows no Harve and doubly sorry if he doesn't know why he doesn't.

I fear that any one who has had the temerity to read this story will have discovered that I have made almost a fetich of friendship. I hereby confess judgment. I have been singularly fortunate in my friendships, many of them in their way rich and rare. I confess I do not like gabblers, people who can talk uninterruptedly and continuously about nothing and say less. Sometimes they write books. I do like companionship of the congenial sort, but I want companions — not preachers. There is an eloquence in silence.

There is a camaraderie that comes to the country as it never does to the city. Summer guests seem more interested than winter ones. I make it a point during my playtime to have as many of my friends share my enjoyment as I can accommodate. It thus happens that I am seldom alone at Burt Lake. When I am, I love to go into the woods and listen to the tales of the trees: sugar trees a hundred years old, towering hemlocks and gnarled beeches the bystanders, the observers of that ruthless onslaught, when at their feet fell the glorious pines, the pride of the forest seventy-five years ago. They tell me of the greed of the butchers, sparing not even the striplings, nothing now but massive stumps to mark the history of the

woods. And then came a second horde of despoilers and laid axe to the hemlocks and maples and beeches and only here and there are tracts of these that escaped the hunger of the mills. It is in one of these tracts that I call my own where I hear the voices and while I live they shall not be hushed.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE QUARTER STRETCH

It is late afternoon. I ought to be growing old, and yet I find my chief interest is not in my own class. With rare exceptions my chums are children, youths, men and women of middle years. I join in their pleasures and aspirations and do not find the edge of enjoyment dulled. I find it a fine world. Life is worth while if one will sit where he can see to read.

I know there are those who say there is no such thing as contentment, but I wonder whether this assertion is not based on a misunderstanding of terms. Otherwise what untoward event has warped the critic's mind! Such a one must think of contentment as typified in a well-fed porker basking in the sun, or else must be himself unable to "accept the universe." Contentment is not a synonym for idleness or laziness or a synonym for lack of aspiration. On the contrary growth is its corollary, and its chief prerequisite the power of adaptation to environment.

As I pass down the quarter stretch to the judges' stand I have no cause to revise my claim. Contentment is possible. Its food is love, its harvest is friends. I certainly cannot complain. I have gotten out of life all that I deserve. I make no pretense of understanding things not meant to be understood, nor judging things that cannot be judged. I simply accept and am not disturbed.

I have always been a nonconformist. I distrust traditions. Superstition makes no appeal to me. I have been tolerant in religion and in politics because the bones of contention have not seemed to me worth fighting for. I do not fancy ready-made mental clothes; I prefer an individual, rational fit. I have not been awed by majorities. I have not been a slave to conventionalities. "Everybody is doing it now" has been of little value to me in determining a satisfactory program of living.

The most important victory I have achieved is the mastery of worry. As long as temperamental fools are born no one can entirely avoid the intrusion of petty annoyances and disturbances in everyday life; but he can prevent these incidental trifles from taking root in his mental attitude and bearing fruit to sour his spirit. No need to curse the elements because the whirlwind of the street occasionally throws dust into our faces. Neither do I regard myself a big enough factor in the universal scheme to interpret the heart-rending tragedies that sooner or later come into every life. I do not understand, but my faith refuses effacement.

I am unable to join the chorus of those who sing always the songs of youth. To me *now* is the most interesting point in life. In retrospect the trials and disappointments of my own youth were just as real and as hard to combat as those of adult life. The best ten years that I have known were the last ten, the best year was last year, the best day today; for to its own joy is added all the joys that have gone before.

The sunbeams are rapidly softening. The sunset approaches. It matters little whether, marking the end of a perfect day the great orb shall slowly drop from a peaceful sky, or whether the storm clouds and rolling thunders shall usher in the night. Always in the darkening east abides the Dusky Nurse. When she holds out her soothing arms let me fearlessly and trustfully approach.

. . . . . .

Thus it seems to me: Unless the fruition of the years is filled with fond friendships, one must have lost the way. Unless what is styled worldly success has been lighted by love, the race has been scarcely worth the running.

As I now sit in the cool of the evening of life and listen to the voices of friends they are very sweet.

Together have we laughed,
Together have we wept;
Together sweet draughts quaffed,
Together vigils kept.

Together in fair weather,
Together in the gale;
Together — careless whether
Together win or fail.

Together have we fought,
Together sometimes won;
Together trophies brought,
Together been undone.

Together long rest earning,
Together heart and heart;
Together in our yearning,
Together though apart.

Together drifting ever,
Together nearing shore;
Together, doubting never,
Together evermore.

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